RUNNING MAN

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REV. FINAL DRAFT

THE RUNNING MAN

FADE IN:

1 FUTURE HISTORY MONTAGE--(STOCK & POST)

A rapid-fire BARRAGE of IMAGES documents the Decline of the West and the simultaneous Rise of the Hucksters.

Book-banners walk the picket lines while Pat Sajack spins the big wheel; Washington Wives condemn rock 'n Roll, vagrants get hustled in Santa Barbara and someone picks door number 3. Snatches of NEWS BULLETINS tell a dismaying tale: The Third World defaults on its loans; A devastating earthquake rocks the West Coast (and the economy); a state of emergency is declared. MONTAGE ENDS with helmeted troopers burning books, records and cassettes.

CUT TO:

2 EXT. FONTANA FOUNDRY - WORK CREW - VARIOUS CUTS - DAY 2

A blasted and scarred landscape of fallen brickwork and scorched earth. In it, we SEE sweat-stained PRISONERS who toss chunks of steel and concrete from one place to another, others who cut into pipes and steel walls with tubed torches.

3 ANGLES UP HIGH 3

Well-armed GUARDS pace the catwalks.

4 PRISONERS--CLOSER 4

Now we see that they wear distinctive badges with ID numbers imprinted: grey for CRIMinal, pink for POLITical. Around each man's neck is a strange collar with blinking LED'S imbedded in it.

5 OMITTED 5

6 NEW ANGLE 6

A powerfully built prisoner CUTS THROUGH some metal with a torch, raises his visor to suck in some air. His name is BEN RICHARDS and his badge is TRAIT--for traitor.

Now he HEAVES the freed chunk of concrete and steel to his shoulder... looks up at a catwalk guard.

CONTINUED

6 CONTINUED -

RICHARDS
Moving out.

GUARD
(finishing it)
Boss.

RICHARDS
(through his teeth)
Moving out...boss.

He's waved on. CAMERA follows him as he treads through the rubble. He gets to the dump area and drops his load with a CRASH. A moment later, a prisoner named LAUGHLIN drops his load. Then both turn at the SOUND of--

6A AN ARMORED TRUCK--THEIR POV 6A

It STOPS beside a bubbling TOXIC PIT where the prisoners are gaunt and grey and the guards wear protective headgear.

As they watch, prisoners load DEAD COMRADES into the truck like cordwood.

BACK TO SCENE 6B

LAUGHLIN
(with quiet pain)
Thompson. Gomez. Dr. Vijay. They must've died last night.

RICHARDS
They were dead the day they came here.

Saying this, he turns and looks across the yard at

6C WEISS 6C

A slender prisoner in a POLIT badge like Laughlin, he wears a trusty's badge and carries a waterboy's bucket and ladle. On Richard's look, he nods... spills out his water. Then he moves towards--

7 A TABLE 7

where LENNY, a guard with a cushy job, sits in the shade at a computer keyboard. Cables run from it to some BLINKING PYLONS which completely surround the work area.

CONTINUED

7 CONTINUED -

Weiss comes over, points to a spigot near Lenny.

WEISS
Getting some water, boss.

Lenny waves him on. Weiss fills the bucket, meanwhile kibitzing.

WEISS
Ah. Direct from nature's bubbling springs, with just a touch of effervesence and a hint of lime.

The guard grunts, unamused. But Weiss' schtick masks another purpose; he's stealing a glance at--

8 THE COMPUTER SCREEN 8

Divided into two "windows", one is a bright red box with the words PERIMETER STATUS: ON." The other window is a list of names.

9 BACK TO SCENE 9

Weiss's face shows shock, which he hides from Lenny, but which returns as we FOLLOW him back to Richards, who raises his eyebrows in silent query.

WEISS
(whispering as he pours)
I saw the new roster for toxic.
We're all on it.

The others react, glance at the death pit again. Richard's jaw tightens under its unkempt beard.

RICHARDS
No way. We're getting out.

He looks at Weiss with hidden meaning... Weiss looks at Laughlin, who nods. Weiss moves away with purpose. At the same time, Laughlin looks up, nods at--

9A A PRISONER ON A SCAFFOLD 9A

Who returns the look, casually begins to edge a cut girder off-balance...

10 thru OMITTED

11A BELOW

Richards and Laughlin return to their work... when the girder CRASHES DOWN, just missing Laughlin.

LAUGHLIN
Damn!

RICHARDS
(moving on)
You ought to watch your step--

Laughlin catches his arm. Richards doesn't like that.

LAUGHLIN
You think that's funny, Fritz?

RICHARDS
The name is Ben. Ben Richards.

LAUGHLIN
You're pretty cocky, Fritz. How come? Maybe you had something to do with that little accident. You got some kinda deal going with your screw buddies? Figure they'll cut you a break for old times sake?

RICHARDS
(hard)
I'm not a cop anymore.

LAUGHLIN
Yeah? How do we know that? Maybe every night you kiss some guard's ass and play snitch and tell.
(louder, for the others)
You're nothing without your badge. Nothing but a Goddamn coward and a murderer. Hey, you hear me, baby killer? You deaf or something?

RICHARDS
No.

And he spins on his heels, SLAMS Laughlin in the face with a powerful fist.

12 NEW ANGLE

At the sound of the blow, both prisoners and guards turn.

13 SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS

Focus on the fight.

14 CATWALK GUARDS

One cocks his weapon, aims... but the NONCOM here holds up his hand, enjoying the display below.

15 BACK TO SCENE

The men grapple fiercely as two groups of prisoners form up around the struggling giants, the white group around Richards, the black and chicano group around Laughlin.

Suddely both groups SURGE TOGETHER, joining in a full-scale brawl. Richards and Laughlin are swallowed by the mob and hidden by dust.

15A WITHIN THE CROWD

Richards and Laughlin stop fighting--exchange places with two other prisoners, who take over, like stand ins! Richards and Laughlin slip through the mob...

GUARDS ON GROUND

Wade into the fringes of the mob, try and break it up with little success--

15C RICHARDS AND LAUGHLIN

Unobserved, they are climbing the pillars towards the catwalks--

16 THE TWO CATWALK GUARDS

Alarmed now by the growing riot, the senior guard AIMS, FIRES.

Bullets rake near the edge of the crowd, one shot winging a man in the calf. The prisoners FREEZE in mid riot.

CATWALK GUARD
Back off! Now!

They comply. The guard leans over the rail, aiming... suddenly frowns.

17 HIS POV

In the center of the circle of prisoners is... no one.

18 BACK TO SCENE

CATWALK GUARD
Where's the two who started it?

RICHARDS
Right here.

The guard turns, too late--Richards seizes him, picks him up bodily, flings him to the ground below.

RICHARDS
(quietly)
Watch that first step.

Richards turns, and we see Laughlin choking the life out of the other guard. Richards helps him toss that body down, then both men LEAP for the scaffolding just as BULLETS from below ping around them.

19 DOWN BELOW

Prisoners pull the guns from the thrown guards, finish them off where they lie.

Other prisoners LEAP on the ground guards who are firing up at Richards and Laughlin. Bodies are in hand-to-hand combat everywhere.

20 RICHARDS AND LAUGHLIN--CRANE SHOT

They scramble down the maze of steel, brawling bodies everywhere below. Richards stops on the lowest level to KICK a guard aside, then he LEAPS onto the back of two others.

21 LENNY

shouts into a walkie talkie.

LENNY
(desperate)
--this is Corona work detail, repeat!
Riot in progress! Riot in--

Wham! Weiss slams him in the head with the water bucket. Lenny DROPS, and the walkie talkie falls to the ground, SPARKING from a short.

22 NEW ANGLE

Richards and Laughlin run up to the computer table, followed by a score of other prisoners. A prisoner named VALDEZ bounces on his heels, flying on energy and who knows what else.

VALDEZ
Come on, Weiss! Turn off the Goddamn deadline--

Weiss is already at the keyboard. Suddenly SNIPER FIRE pings all around. A prisoner drops. Weiss ducks under the table, taking the keyboard, and peering up over the edge as he works. Richards and Laughlin take a position to return the gunfire.

RICHARDS
(as he fires)
Laughlin. You're a good actor.

LAUGHLIN
(also firing)
Who was acting?

RICHARDS
I was.

LAUGHLIN
(skeptical)
Yeah.

RICHARDS
(slapping in a clip)
You're alive, aren't you?

And he FIRES--

23 ONE GUARD SNIPER

Drops, hit... another takes his place--

24 BACK TO SCENE

RICHARDS
Weiss, come on!

WEISS
(still under the table)
I gotta get in the subprogram--

He types again, peers over the table edge... then on the MONITOR, "CODE ACCEPTED" blinks. Then, BEGIN DEACTIVATION SEQUENCE flashes. The Pylons begin to CHANGE COLOR, turning in a rolling wave from RED to YELLOW. The men CHEER.

CONTINUED

24 CONTINUED - 24

VALDEZ
(moving)
All right--!

WEISS
(shouting)
No, no--not yet--!

25 LONG SHOT 25

Unheeding, Valdez crosses the line. His collar EXPLODES. His head vanishes like a melon hit by a sledge hammer. His body takes one last step, topples.

26 REVERSE ANGLE 26

As Valdez's legs twitch in the dust, the pylons finish their change from YELLOW to GREEN.

Richards-- one step from the deadline---throws Weiss a look--but crosses... and lives!

Reassured, the others RUSH across the line. Richards covers their escape, FIRING back at the rooftop snipers, and then the prisoners vanish into the surrounding ruins.

CUT TO:

27 EXT. BARRIO--NIGHT 27

Hi-intensity spotlights sweep across buildings that have been crumbling since they were erected in the 20th century. In the distance, a SIREN wails.

RECORDED VOICE
(distant, echoing)
Attention all residents. Attention all residents. Curfew is now in force. Atencion, todos los residentes...Atencion...

A COMMERCIAL plays on the big public screen here: We see an ATTRACTIVE COUPLE in a bucolic setting. It's like a cola ad. This goes on a bit, music over, then we HEAR:

NARRATOR
A happy child...your child...a licensed and authorized child.
(faster)
Avoid penalties. Register now.

CONTINUED

27 CONTINUED - 27

The picture freeze frames, changes to a logo: GOVERNMENT PROCREATION COMMISSION.

28 BARRIO--CLOSER 28

Several FIGURES slip between the shadows of corregated lean-to's and patched canvas tents.

In the front is STEVIE, a worldly seventeen year old, who KNOCKS twice on a metal door, gets the appropriate RETURN KNOCK.

Stevie turns, WHISTLES in the dark. A moment later Richards, Laughlin and Wiess run up. They're in different but well-worn clothing that doesn't entirely hide the blinking collars around their necks. The door rolls up and they slip inside.

CUT TO:

29 INT. MIC'S CHOP SHOP 29

TIGHT on Laughlin as he sighs with relief, feeling around his neck where a mark like a hangman's noose is the only indication of the neck collar.

WIDER 31

A strange FIGURE lowers odd headgear, helps Laughlin out of a chair, turns towards CAMERA. His name is MIC, and he's got that odd helmet under one arm now, and he holds metal shears up with the other hand. The eyes under their mane of grey-flecked hair twinkle with amusement.

MIC
(like a barber)
Next?

Weiss steps forward, sitting down in the battered Eames chair just vacated by Laughlin. In the farther shadows of the room, we see painted over windows... the shapes of old cars in various stages of repair... and several PARTISANS with pistols in their belts, looking more like desperadoes than resistance fighters.

31 RICHARDS 31

He's hemmed in by two of the meanest looking partisans. Both look like they want a piece of him.

32 BACK TO SCENE

Weiss squirms as Mic examines the necklace.

WEISS
I never thought I'd be glad to see this dump again...
(nervously)
Mic, you're ah, sure this is, uh, safe?

MIC
Absolutely.

And, saying this, Mic turns and slips his head and shoulders into his jury-rigged bomb squad gear. We can see it clearly now. It's an old diver's helmet connected to a flak jacket and gloves.

Weiss reacts nervously, then Mic pushes him deeper in the chair, selects a small dentist's tool from a tray. He uses this to slowly and carefully scrape a groove in a seam in the collar.

MIC
You guys missed a lot while you were on vacation.

WEISS
Is this gonna be one of those good news-bad news routines?

MIC
Just bad news and worse news.
(to Laughlin)
They closed down what was left of your school. The kids are either in hiding or in basic training.

Laughlin sighs, stricken.

LAUGHLIN
Damn. We lose the kids, we lose the future. Without the schools, man, the Goddamn TV's got 'em brainwashed.

WEISS
What about jamming? What happened to that plan?

MIC
(shaking his head)
I've got people looking for the uplink all over the city. I don't know how the Network hid something that big, but they managed.

33 RICHARDS--CLOSE 33

Listening to this with interest. He notices one of the partisans has some cigars in his pocket. Richards helps himself to one.

WEISS
(O.S)
We have to find it and crack the code. (X)

34 BACK TO SCENE 34

WEISS(cont'd)
We do that, we can beam right up to the Network satellite-- use their own system against them. (X)

LAUGHLIN
Yeah. And get out the word...the real word. Everywhere at once.

A moment's silence; a high pitched BEEPING has begin. Cut, snip--quickly, Mic flings the collar into a nearby floor safe like a live cobra.

35 FLOOR SAFE--CLOSER 35

Stevie kicks the door shut with a bored look. The safe ROCKS with a small but violent EXPLOSION.

36 BACK TO SCENE 36

Weiss gets up, wipes his brow. Mic wags a finger at Richards, who slowly crosses the room, feeling very much the outsider. He sits down. Mic examines the blinking collar.

WEISS
Mick, forget about that massacre story. (X)
It's a lie. The Government framed him. (X)

MIC (to Laughlin)
Is that true? (X)

LAUGHLIN
(With a shrug indicating Richards)
According to him. (X)

Mic looks at Richards appraisingly.

MIC (to Laughlin)
Maybe you was one of the cops who locked (X)
up all my friends...burned my songs. (X)
People like you took this country and (X)
turned it into a jail. And now? (X)

CONTINUED

36 CONTINUED - 36

Mac's through scraping with the tool. Now he JAMS it into the works of the collar and that beeping starts again.

MIC
Now, you've seen too much. (X)

37 THE ROOM 37

Stevie steps back from the open safe door, away from danger. The others here do the same.

38 BACK TO SCENE 38

Mic still hasn't used the shears. The LED's blink faster.

RICHARDS
(casually)
I've seen too much? All I've seen are a bunch of rock and roll pussies who think they can save the world with dreams and talk. It's too late for that. So if you're not ready to move... give me a break and shut up. (X) (X) (X) (X)

And, saying this, he strikes a match on the brass grillwork in front of Mic's eyes.

The room is suddenly still. Richards lights and puffs the cigar, oblivious.... and then Mic begins to laugh, great, booming laughs that echo inside his helmet.

39 THE SHEARS--VERY CLOSE 39

SNIP through the necklace-- we HEAR a BANG--

40 WIDER 40

Weiss jumps out of his skin... then he turns at the SOUND of laughter and sees Stevie, who's just pushed over a big metal fender with a crash.

WEISS
Funny. Very funny.

Mic tosses the necklace in the safe. As it EXPLODES harmlessly, he grins and gives Richards a hand out of the chair.

CUT TO:

41 EXT. BARRIO BAZAAR--DAY 41

An impromtu village of tin and cardboard has taken root here, surrounding the city gate. Electrical extension cords and water hoses criss-cross and dangle everywhere in lieu of public utilities. Children in faded Running Man T-shirts and caps spash through puddles, "zapping" each other with pointed forefingers. In a corner, two families fight over an extension cord.

The faces here are of all races: Black, white, brown, Asian. They look towards the gleaming city with expressions like those of the refugees in the opening frames of Casablanca.

42 NEAR THE WALL 42

Several flatbed trucks are parked here. Flashily dressed Pachuco foremen stand in the back of each one.

They hold up cardboard signs in Spanish and Korean (we can read "trabajeros domesticos" and "jardineros"), and they shout and point at candidates in the crowd, who fight to get close enough to pay two dollar bribes and climb aboard.

A FORMAN
Venga, Venga, I need workers for the City. Jardineros, chofers-- you get inside the air conditioning and a free lunch--

2ND FOREMAN
(Rapidfire)
Tu, Tu...el gordo, y su amigo-- chica, comprendez un microwave? Bueno, aqui--

43 NEW ANGLE 43

We see that the group near this truck includes Richards, Laughlin, Weiss, and Mic and Stevie.

MIC
There's your ride. It's all set.

RICHARDS
Nothing like first class...
(turning)
I guess this is it.
(with affection)
Weiss, you stay out of the National database... Laughlin, stop trying to teach the Constitution to street punks and you'll be all right without me.

CONTINUED

43 CONTINUED - 43

WEISS
Ben... you're still welcome to join us...

RICHARDS
Thanks. But my brother will get me out of the city. I'm not into politics. I'm into survival.

LAUGHLIN
(with quiet wisdom)
Nowadays, Fritz, they're the same thing.

The men shake hands like football players. Then Weiss and Laughlin are waved on to one truck... Richards on to another... the trucks rumble through the gate...

CUT TO:

44 A PUBLIC VIDEO SCREEN--CLOSE 44

A distinctive "ICS" logo goes through computer-animated gyrations.

SONG LYRICS
We're ICS
We bring you joy
We bring you strife
We're not just Entertainment
We're part of your life!

CAMERA ADJUSTS and we SEE that this public screen is near a wide stairwell. Richards appears, tries to look inconspicuous as he moves by. The picture changes to a CARTOON SLIDE--

CARTOON VOICE
Remember kids... Susie Checkpoint sez, do your part! Report curfew violators to your local authorities!

45 EXT. ICS NETWORK BUILDING--DAY 45

A line of people fidget under a sign reading "RUNNING MAN TICKETS". The people in it look like they want to get into the air conditioning as much as they want to see a show, and the queue snakes out of sight.

CAMERA ADJUSTS as a limousine pulls up at the curb. Damon Killian gets out, accompanied by a pretty production assistant named BRENDA and a powerfully build AIDE (SVEN.) Immediately, a buzz goes through the crowd.

CONTINUED

45 CONTINUED - 45

CROWD
(ad-lib)
Look, it's him...! Hey, Damon Killian...! Who's that with him, a Stalker...? Nah, I got all their trading cards...etc.

They head inside, Brenda ad-libbing a finish to a conversation she's having on a cellular phone. Killian waves good-naturedly, signs an autograph or two.

KILLIAN
Darling, it's been too long. Your husband doesn't know about us, does he...? (X) (X)

She giggles. Sven carves a path through the crowd. Killian's smile fades as he approaches the building.

KILLIAN
(to Brenda, sarcastically)
Is that a private call, Brenda or do you have this weeks ratings? (X) (X)

BRENDA
(lowering antenna)
They're the same as last week, and those were the same all last month. I guess we've just peaked. But it's not like we dropped--

A guard opens the door.

KILLIAN
(entering)
You amaze me, sweetheart. (X)

46 INT. NETWORK CORRIDOR--DAY 46

Killian walks as a CUSTODIAN who's mopping up bumps into him. The custodian is mortified, but Killian pats him reassuringly. At the same moment Killian's director TONY runs up, his paranoia as visible as his tan.

CUSTODIAN
Sorry, Mr. Killian. (X)

KILLIAN
Don't worry pop, you're doing great work... (X)

CONTINUED

46 CONTINUED - 46

TONY
Damon, thank God! The Justice Department's been calling every ten minutes.

KILLIAN
(to Tony)
Give them an evasive answer. Tell them to go fuck themselves. (X) (X)

He pauses in a doorway and points at the custodian.

KILLIAN (cont'd)
And Tony, if that asshole is mopping that floor tomorrow, you'll be mopping it for the rest of the week. (X) (X)

47 INT. 911 ROOM--DAY 47

A mind-boggling array of computers and video screens: The nerve center of both Cadre surveillance and ICS broadcasting. Killain's group cuts through the room, Killain waving and smiling at his police fans, who all LAUGH at his wisecracks: (X

KILLIAN
Hello Marsha. I love the uniform. (X
Ed, I'm parked in a yellow zone... (X
you'll take care of it..? (X
(to Brenda)
Okay, what have we got for this week?

TONY
(reading from notes)
There's 34B. Child Molester from Sector seven. You know, the one with the sausage grinder--?

KILLIAN
(shuddering)
Christ. Next.

As they go into Killian's office, Killian's eyes catch a glimpse of--

48 MONITOR--911 ROOM 48

It's rewinding at HIGH SPEED footage of the Fontana prison break.

CUT TO:

49 AN UPSCALE NEIGHBORHOOD--DAY 49

A billboard here advertises "The Running Man". Richards appears, moving quickly towards a gleaming lobby door. He holds it politely for an exiting MATRON, then goes inside, strides confidently to the tenants' directory and its buzzers. He runs his finger down the list of names, stops.

50 INSERT--TENANTS NAMES 50

The place for APT. 405 is empty behind its little plastic window. On the discolored plastic, we can barely make out some of the letters: "R char ds".

51 INT. LOBBY 51

Richards scowls, hits the button. Nothing. Outside, a police patrol slowly cruises past.

Concerned, Richards starts playing the field, buzzing anyone and everyone.

TENANT'S VOICE
(finally)
Yes?

RICHARDS
Electrician. Here about the lights--

TENANT'S VOICE
Wrong condo.

RICHARDS
Hello. Poolman.

2ND TENANT'S VOICE
Who the hell has a pool?

SULTRY WOMAN'S VOICE
(right on the buzz)
Is that my little snookie wookums?

Richards thinks... makes some ROMANTIC NOISES. NOTE: ALT. LINEE(S) HERE.

He's buzzed inside.

52 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING--DAY 52

Richards comes around the corner on the 4th floor, moves cautiously down the corridor to number 405. He knocks. Nothing.

Then he tries the door code on the key panel beside the door. No results. Finally, frustrated, he yanks the key panel out of the plaster, finds two wires and shorts them.

The door opens. He puts the key panel back in place as best he can, goes inside.

53 INT. AMBER'S APARTMENT--DAY 53

Richards comes in.

RICHARDS
Edward. It's me, Ben--

He stops, looking around.

54 APARTMENT--HIS P.O.V. 54

It's freshly painted. A wallpaper sample is pinned to one wall. Everything is cloyingly cute, trendy and feminine.

RICHARDS 55

All at sea, he moves further into the apartment.

CUT TO:

56 INT. KILLIAN'S OFFICE--DAY 56

WIDEN from a conference table littered with dirty ashtrays, empty food containers. We see Killian and his staff, wearly from a long casting session. As they CONTINUE, we see the room. A cheery hobby horse serves as a spare chair. Awards and testimonials ("HUMANITARIAN OF THE YEAR") are everywhere. A large wall chart tracks the Network schedule, with magnetic cards indicating such series as "PAIN AMERICAN STYLE", "SWIM FOR YOUR LIFE", "I CONFESS", "THE HATE BOAT", and, of course, "THE RUNNING MAN."

Killian sits behind a desk covered with antique toys and banks, swivels impatiently. Tony uses a remote control to FAST FORWARD on one of several monitor screens.

Electronic dossiers start flicking by, along with faces, police photos, even surveillance photos taken from banks, etc.

CONTINUED

56 CONTINUED - 56

TONY
How's this one? Case 114. Schoolteacher. Killed his wife and his mother in law--

KILLIAN
Oh yeah? The neighbors always say he's such a quiet man but never too busy to say hello. But look at him. He must weigh 120 pounds. He'll last 30 seconds. Next. (X) (X) (X)

BRENDA
(helpful, pointing)
What about those bank robbers? The ones who made that suicide pact?

KILLIAN
Forget it. No more fags. We get too many letters.

He pivots in his chair, ZAPS another screen with a private control.

TONY
(to Brenda)
I got a friend at William Morris... maybe they've got an ax murderer or something--somebody with stamina--

Suddenly they notice Killian's chair is empty.

57 NEW ANGLE 57

They follow Killian to the monitor wall. Nearby a window overlooks the 911 room. Killian hovers near the monitor like a kid outside a candy store.

KILLIAN
Hello gorgeous! Look at him! They were running this tape when we came in. (X) (X)

They look at the monitor. It's showing the Fontana escape. The cameras ZOOM in on Richards in action.

KILLIAN
God, look at that mother move. I gotta have him. Who is he?

TONY
Are you kidding? That's Ben Richards.

CONTINUED

57 CONTINUED - 57

KILLIAN
(remembering)
The cop from the massacre? Why didn't we think of that! He's a perfect contestant--

BRENDA
We can't have him--

KILLIAN
Why not?

BRENDA
Damon, you know our contract--we never get political prisoners--

TONY
Who's a prisoner? He's still at large--

KILLIAN
(returning to his desk)
Well, they'll catch him for me. Screw politics. The Goddamned Cadre can't have it both ways. They want fuckin' ratings? We'd get ten points for his biceps alone. (X)

He picks up a phone, dials.

KILLIAN
This is Killian. Get me the Justice Department, Entertainment Division...
(thinking)
No, hold that...
(smiling at his staff)
Get me the President's agent.

CUT TO:

58 INT. APARTMENT CORRIDOR--DAY 58

AMBER MENDES walks down the corridor. She's pretty, trim, wears a high-style business suit and carries purse and bags from exclusive shops. In short, she's every inch a Twuppy (Twenty-first Century Urban Professional).

Humming a tune we will later recognize, she marches to Apt. 405... frowns when the keypad doesn't work.

Scowling, she juggles bags and purse, finds a magnetic card which she slips into the door lock. It HISSES open.

59 INT. AMBER'S APARTMENT--DAY 59

Amber comes, sidesteps some boxes, tosses her bags on her fashionable sofa, kicks off her shoes near a music synthesizer, loosens her scarf.

She crosses the living room, disrobing as she moves. She strips down to a teddy, heads for the next room. CAMERA FOLLOWS HER, and we see (but she doesn't) that Richards is in the kitchen, raiding the refrigerator. He FREEZES as he hears her footsteps, ducks out of sight.

60 AMBER--NEXT ROOM--NEAR BIGSCREEN TV 60

There's a hi-tech home exercise rig here. Amber sits on the bench, and then uses a remote control to turn on the bigscreen TV.

60A TV--CLOSER 60A

A PANIC STRICKEN MAN in a strange coverall runs towards CAMERA, looks around, terrified... he steps around a desolate corner, reacts to--

60B APPROACHING VEHICLE--HIS POV 60B

A hideous juggernaut, all treads and spikes--

60C BACK TO SCENE 60C

The vehicle SLAMS into him, dismembering his body with a splat--

NARRATOR'S VOICE
(rapid fire, hype-y)
"The Running Man"--Fridays at nine on ICS--be there!

60D AMBER--CONTINUOUS 60D

She grimaces, but the slight scale of her reaction shows us that this era is pretty gore-proof. She CLICKS the channel changer again, and gets--

an EXERCISE SHOW! Barely clad dancers (The "Stalkettes") gyrate while a muscular figure in a red, white and blue jockstrap takes center stage. His name is CAPTAIN FREEDOM (or "CAP"), and he points directly at the CAMERA.

CAP
Are you ready for pain? Are you ready for suffering?

60E RICHARDS 60E

He's moved to a less visible location...

60F BACK TO SCENE 60F

CAP (Cont'd)
If the answer is yes... then you're ready for "Captain Freedom's Workout! A-one, two three--

Amber happily begins to pump in time with this. A DIGITAL READ-OUT with her name and phsyical stats becomes supered on the screen... then, suddenly, the picture flicks OFF.

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE
We interrupt "CAPTAIN FREEDOM'S WORKOUT" to bring you this urgent message from the ICS Newscenter...

Annoyed, Amber looks over at the set...

61 SET--HER P.O.V. 61

NEWSCASTER (on CAMERA)
The City Police are engaged in door to door search for Benjaman A. Richards, known as "The Butcher of Bakersfield", who is still at large after yesterday's escape from a prison workgang.

The picture changes to a FILE PHOTO of Richards with moustache.

NEWSCASTER
(over photo)
Richards, a former police officer, was the helicopter pilot who went berserk eighteen months ago, firing without warning on a crowd of innocent civilians. He is considered armed and dangerous. If you see this man, do not approach him; contact your local Block Warden. Now, back to "CAPTAIN FREEDOM'S WORKOUT"...

62 AMBER 62

resumes her bench presses--suddenly to her surprise, she can't move the bar. She looks up--and GASPS as she sees--

63 RICHARDS--UPSIDES DOWN--HER P.O.V.

Hovering over her, one finger on the weight bar!

64 NEW ANGLE 64

She starts to SCREAM--he clamps a hand over her mouth.

RICHARDS
Don't make a sound. Understand?

Frightened, she nods.

RICHARDS
Who are you? A friend of my brother's--?

AMBER
Brother? I-I don't know what you mean--

RICHARDS
This was his apartment--

AMBER
I moved in last month! They said the last tenant was--

RICHARDS
Yes?

AMBER
--taken away for.. re-education.

Richards' face shows us what that means. Amber seizes the moment of his disorientation, ROLLS AWAY from his grip, hits the floor running! Richards REACTS, TACKLES her--the momentum takes them both onto the bed! He pins her, pushing her into the mattress.

RICHARDS
Now listen to me, because I'm only going to say this once.
(indicating TV)
All that is a lie. I was framed. The evidence against me was faked. I am completely innocent. I would never, never hurt or kill a helpless person.

Amber looks pop-eyed at the giant pinning her down, sneaks a glance at the nearest bicep.

AMBER
Right. Sure.

64 CONTINUED - 64

Seeing she's relatively calm, he slowly backs away from the bed.

RICHARDS
Be quiet, sit still and I'll be out of here in five minutes--

She makes another DASH for freedom. He tackles her again and they both land with a THUD off CAMERA behind the bed.

CAP(on TV)
That's the ticket... no pain, no gain!

CUT TO:

65 INT. SHOWER--DAY 65

Richards luxuriates in hot water, clean soap. He lets the streaming water-run over his body. Then he looks at the soap dish, where a petite woman's razor sits. He looks at it skeptically, shrugs, then attacks his beard...

66 RICHARDS 66

Now competely clean shaven, clad in a towel, he comes out of the bathroom, toweling off his face. CAMERA ADJUSTS to follow him as he returns to the kitchen.

And we see Amber. Scraps of torn sheets tie her spread-eagled to her exercise machine. Seeing Richards in this condition, her eyes widen a bit.

Richards eyes falls on the synthesizer. A monitor is on top of it, and cables run to a small but sophisiticated video camera. Richards looks suspiciously at all this, then at Amber. She MUMBLES something under her gag.

RICHARDS
(lowering the gag)
What is all that?

AMBER
(nervous, explaining)
That's my synthesizer setup. I'm a musician. Really, a singer. I mean, I will be. Right now I write music for the Network. Did you ever hear the Network theme song ("we bring you joy, we bring you strife"?) I wrote that.

CONTINUED

66 CONTINUED -

RICHARDS
(deadpan)
You must be very proud.

He spots a steamer trunk under a table, pulls it out.

AMBER
That's nothing, really--

It's full of clothes: Men's women's, kids, all still labled. And there's some CD disks and cassettes. Richards notes the labels.

RICHARDS
These are all on the censored list... and this looks like black market clothing...
(chiding)
And you wrote the Network jingle...

AMBER
Come on--everybody does it--

RICHARDS
I'm in no position to argue.

He holds some of the clothes up to himself for size. Then he sees her purse on the sofa. He opens it, takes some bills.

AMBER(cont'd)
That money's not going to do you any good. You can't get get out of this Quad. You don't have a Travel Pass.

Richards crosses over to where she dropped her clothes. He finds the Travel Pass clipped to her blazer, pulls it free. Looking around, he sees her telephone and its computer interface. He puts the card in the slot, types some numbers, yanks it out.

RICHARDS
Now I do.
(stepping closer)
All right. I'm going to untie you now... and then you're going to get dressed and come with me.

AMBER
Why should I?

Richards steps closer, grabs the crossbeam of the exercise machine.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED - (2) 66

He PULLS her UP TO HIS EYE LEVEL, lifting girl, bench and weights!

RICHARDS
Because I'm going to say "please."

AMBER
(pause)
Oh. Why didn't you say so?

67 INT. TRANSIT TERMINAL-- DAY 67

AN EXPLOSION of NOISE--easily the loudest sound in this film since poor Valdez lost his head. But this is not pyrotechnics, it is RECORDED DEPARTURE TIMES, PAGING ANNOUNCEMENTS, and the echoes of scores of busy travelers. A high police presence and propaganda POSTERS and SLOGANS give the terminal a hint of totalitarian zeitgeist.

CAMERA ADJUSTS, focuses on the doorway, where a crowd of TOURISTS on an organized junket bustle into the terminal. Most wear floral leis, vacation garb.

TOURISTS--CLOSER 68

Richards and Amber are with this group. He's clean shaven now, wearing a garish Hawaiian shirt from that steamer trunk, along with sunglasses and a tourist's straw hat. Amber looks equally tropical. She squirms in his firm grip.

AMBER
(sotto)
You'll never pull this off. Every cop in the city's looking for you. You're unarmed, you're outnumbered, you're screwed. Face it, they're gonna kill you. So why don't you just turn yourself in?

RICHARDS
You know, you're a very negative person.

She glares at him. Richards looks over at--

69 SECURITY CHECKPOINT--HIS POV--INTERCUT DOLLY SHOT 69

--as they slowly approach it. The queue of tourist is bottling up as the guard checks id's. Beyond the guard we see waiting shuttle buses.

70 BACK TO SCENE

Richards mouth tightens. He pulls Amber a bit closer.

RICHARDS
(sotto)
Remember, I can crack your neck like a chicken's.

Then he SMILES warmly, because they've reached the BURLY GUARD, who snaps curtly--

AIRPORT GUARD
Travel pass.

Affable, Richards hands it over. The guard extends an electronic reader towards it, slides it over the code. Richards smiles at Amber, his eyes drifting towards the guard's electronic clipboard.

RICHARDS
What a beautiful day. I can practically taste those pina coladas already. Right, sweetheart?

71 ELECTRONIC CLIPBOARD--HIS POV

At an oblique angle, we can see a green light flash at the top while the word "VALID-VALID" blinks below.

72 BACK TO SCENE

The guard returns it, looks at Amber.

RICHARDS
Darling. Your turn.

AMBER
(thrown)
My...turn--? Uh, I--

Exasperated, Ricahards grabs her purse, begins rummaging through it.

RICHARDS
You didn't put it in your purse again, did you?
(to the guard)
Last vacaction she put my credit cards in here. We couldn't find them for a week--hold this--

CONTINUED

72 CONTINUED -

He gives the guard a compact and an ankle length stocking, sighing mightily.

ELDERLY WOMAN
(from the rear)
You wanna move it up there? Some of us got a plane to catch!

GUARD
(exasperated)
Go on, go on--!

And he waves Richards and Amber through. The guard fumbles to return the feminine items. Richards shrugs at him, smiles.

RICHARDS
Can't live with 'em, can't live without 'em.

Amber glares at Richards, then he hustles her along and they're both lost in the crowd.

73 INT. SHUTTLE BUS--DAY

Richards steers Amber to a window seat, still hanging on to her.

AMBER
(hushed)
I'm warning you, I get carsick. I'm gonna throw up all over you--

RICHARDS
(sotto, pleasant)
Go ahead. It won't show on this shirt.

The elderly woman from the terminal leans across the aisle, taps him.

ELDERLY WOMAN
I'm sorry I yelled at you. Now I know your little secret.

RICHARDS
(wary)
Excuse me?

ELDERLY WOMAN
You're on your honeymoon, aren't you?

CONTINUED

73 CONTINUED -

RICHARDS
(smiling)
How could you tell?

ELDERLY WOMAN
Are you kidding? The way you hold on to eacn other, it's adorable.

AMBER
Adorable. Right. That's us.

Saying this, she turns to give Richard's arm a savage squeeze, but it's like giving a noogie to Mt. Rushmore. As Amber winces, the bus starts forward--

CUT TO:

74 INT. MAIN TERMINAL--DAY

The guard at the checkpoint is doing his job when another OFFICER comes up, hands him a computerized printout.

75 PRINTOUT--CLOSE

Divided in quarters, it shows Richard's file photo in the upper corner, with three artist's renditions of possible disguises around it: Cleanshaven. Glasses...

76 BACK TO SCENE

The checkpoint officer reacts, fumbles for his transceiver.

CUT TO:

77 AIRPORT POD--LOW ANGLE

The bus hisses to a stop. Feet clump down the steps. We WIDEN, see Richards and Amber. They move toward the pod, where a smiling ATTENDENT hands out boarding passes.

Richards can taste freedom now. Then he turns, HEARING--

78 POLICE VEHICLE--IN DISTANCE

Coming towards us, its SIREN growing louder.

79 BACK TO SCENE

Richards turns. (From the other direction, several officers are running across the field.) Richards pushes his way to the head of the line, still holding Amber.

RICHARDS
Excuse me... excuse me...

But Amber's seen the threat, too, and senses rescue. Her eyes dart around and she sees the woman in front of her is pulling one of those flimsy carts piled with suitcases.

As Richards steers her around it, Amber reaches down, releasing the elastic strap. Bags crash down, and as people dodge them a human wedge is driven between Amber and her captor. She backpedals, stumbles, catches the arm of the attendant.

AMBER
(pointing, shouting)
Help! He's Ben Richards! He's kidnapping me!

The startled attendant hits a control and the door HISSES SHUT. An ALARM rings.

80 RICHARDS

takes a half step towards Amber--but then he sees the police car careening in, and he whirls, runs across the tarmac in another direction, but--damn it--the foot cops are that way.

Richards zig-zags... a foolhardy cop runs to cut him off: Richards blocks his charge like a linebacker, flings him aside-- his fellows trip over him! The confusion creates an opening. He PUNCHES another cop, and now he's got a clear run to the distant trees, but then two cops loom up, pointing some sort of device--

81 COPS--CLOSER

A net is launched towards Richards!

82 RICHARDS--LOW ANGLE

He staggers as the net drops, but gets his footing, plunges on-- pulls both cops off their feet! Now he tears at the ropes, but then more cops shoot another net over him. He STUMBLES, cursing-- one powerful arm RIPS up towards the freedom of the sky and a passing plane-- and then the cops are up and pulling their lines and Richards is yanked off his feet like the catch of the day.

83 AMBER

Still near the bus, she winces with visceral feeling as Richards slams into the tarmac.

Then she sets her jaw: (After all, he was asking for it; she only did her civic duty.)

Beside her, the elderly woman we met earlier looks at her in shock.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Honey, you couldn't get a divorce like everyone else?

There's no reply to this, because a police officer politely grasps Amber and leads her away--

CUT TO:

84 EXT. NETWORK--NIGHT (MATTE SHOT) 84

The ICS sign is spotlit. Cut-out FIGURES of Network characters decorate the roof, including Captain Freedom, Damon Killian, even "Susie Checkpoint".

A police HELICOPTER approaches the building, lands. The door opens and we see Richards. He wears leg irons and his wrists are chained to a manacle belt. Several officers lead him to the rooftop elevator...

84A INT. KILLIAN'S OFFICE--NIGHT 84A

A POLICE OFFICER slams papers down in front of Amber's startled and exhausted face. A 2ND OFFICER waits nearby.

FIRST OFFICER
You never saw him before? Never laid eyes on him? But you let him charge tickets to Hawaii on your card... you went with him--

AMBER
I didn't have any choice! He made me do it--

CONTINUED

84A CONTINUED - 84A

SECOND OFFICER
Yeah? Made you how?
(grabbing her chin)
Doesn't look like he roughed you up---
(with a leer)
or maybe he liked you---?

AMBER
This ...this is crazy! You're acting like I'm the criminal instead of him! I screamed for help the minute I had a chance-- what else could I--

Suddenly Killian comes in. The officers back off immediately.

KILLIAN
Jesus, are you still at it? Boys, don't you have anything better to do?

OFFICER
Sorry, Mr. Killian. But we have questions--

KILLIAN
Hey, me too. Like, why don't they make milk duds anymore? Why can't you get a decent pizza on the West coast? Look, this woman works in our music department. I'll vouch for her. (X)

She gets up shakily. He helps her.

AMBER
T-thank you, Mr. Killian... I tried to explain--

KILLIAN
Don't worry about it. Go home get some rest.

She staggers out, becoming a little figure in the hallway that stretches away.

KILLIAN
(to no one)
Nice ass...
(turning)
Keep an eye on her.

CONTINUED

84A CONTINUED - (2) 84A

He goes out.

CUT TO:

85 INT. LOCKER ROOM--HOLDING TANK--NIGHT 85

With a THUD, Richards is tossed against the glass wall, then sealed in. His movement hampered by his chains, he looks around, suspicious.

86 LOCKER ROOM--HIS POV 86

Well lit and decorated, like an uptown Y. A TROPHY CASE holds championship belts, loving cups, figurings of Stalkers dragging limp victims behind them.

Wall photos show past and present Champions.

Damon Killian steps towards Richards. With a nod and a wave, Killian waves the guards in the corner away.

KILLIAN
He, cutie-pie. One of us is in deep trouble... You know who I am?

RICHARDS
I know you. You're that asshole on TV.

KILLIAN
(pleasantly)
That's funny. I was going to say (X)
the same thing about you. I caught (X)
the video of your prison break. (X)
(amused)
How the hell do you get insurance? (X)

Killian moves around the tank. A bored looking janitor moves by in the fat b.g., ablivious to the prisoner in the cage.

KILLIAN
Ben, I think we can help each other out. I've got the brains, you've got the talent. Talent, and charisma, and--
(grinning)
Balls. (X)

(MORE)

CONTINUED

86 CONTINUED - 86

KILLIAN (cont'd)
And, let's face it. "The Butcher of Bakersfield". God, I love that fuckin' name... Hey don't knock it. (X)
It made you famous. That's why I (X)
pulled strings to get you in here. That's why I'd like you to volunteer for tomorrow's broadcast of The Running Man. So what do you say?

Richards leans against the glass conspiratorially. Killian steps closer.

RICHARDS
I have a teacher friend who'd have a very profound answer for you. I'll have to do the best I can.
(pause)
Fuck you.

KILLIAN
Ben, you're a brilliant conversationist. A trifle limitied, but brilliant. (X)
Funny you should mention schoolteacher.

Killian moves to--

87 A VIDEO CONTROL PANEL--CLOSE 87

Where Killian is already flipping dials. A monitor FLICKERS ON. We see a picture taken by a high angle surveillance camera.

It's a view in a cell somewhere.

In it, Laughlin and Weiss pace, captive!

88 REVERSE ANGLE 88

Richards reacts, concerned. Killian's pleased.

KILLIAN
Why, what a coincidence! There he is right there! And there's your other buddy... the one who took care of you in the prison infirmary.

RICHARDS
What are you going to do with them?

CONTINUED

88 CONTINUED - 88

KILLIAN
That's up to you, Ben. You see, I invented The Running man, but I don't make the rules. I've got a contract make the government. They (X)
send me convicts, I put 'em on the (X)
show. You've seen it. And yo know you've got at least a chance. But your friends here? They're the "B" list, Ben.
If you don't do The Running Man (X)
(shrugging)
Weiss and Laughlin will go on in your place. Well? What do you say?

89 RICHARDS

As he thinks about his options... and realizes he hasn't any.

CUT TO:

INT. AMBER'S APARTMENT--DAY

She's in a robe, hair just washed, recoving from Hostage Phobia. The big TV is on in the B.G., sound MUTED. Now, Amber starts a recording, speaks into the microphone.

AMBER
Junior Stalker Camp, take one.

She sips coffee, clears her throat.

AMBER
(singing)
"When you're all alone
and there's no one home
And there's an empty place
in your heart--"

CUT TO:

91 INT. LOCKER ROOM--MED AREA--DAY 9

Richards is horizontal, strapped immobile to a rotating table. Clamps hold his arms, legs and head in place and a wedge is in his jaw. As TECHNICIANS work on him, a MED TECH watches computerized monitors.

CONTINUED

91 CONTINUED -

MED TECH
Prepare Stress analyizers.
Implant...now.

92 CLOSER

A MECHANICAL DRILL-LIKE APPARATUS literally SCREWS into Richards' shoulder--blood runs down his arm--

CUT TO:

93 INT. AMBER'S APARTMENT--RESUME-DAY

She's writing notes on score sheets, humming to herself. Suddenly something on the TV catches her eye. She turns, picks up the remote control.

94 NEW ANGLE--SHOWING SCREEN

Footage of Richard's capture at the airport is on screen.

NEWSCASTER
(in mid-speech)
--capture of mass murderer and renegade police officer Ben Richards earlier today, filmed by the runway security camera. Richard's hostage Amber Mendees was unharmed--

AMBER
(correcting the screen)
Men-dez--

NEWSCASTER
(resuming)
--but some airport personnel were not so lucky, like the ticket agent and security guard Richards shot at point blank range when he arrived at the airport...

95 NEW ANGLE

Showing injured people being put on gurneys.

96 AMBER

She reacts--

CUT TO:

97 INT. MED TECH AREA--DAY

MED TECH
Starating Barium I.V.

An I.V. needle is rammed into Richard's inner thigh. A drip bottle is opened. Strange green gunk flows through the tube.

98 MONITOR SCREEN

Richard's circulatory system shows up, the pattern emanating from the I.V.

CUT TO:

99 INT. AMBER'S APARTMENT--RESUME--DAY

Her face shows increasing puzzlement as she watches and listens to--

NEWSCASTERS' VOICE
Airport medical personnel treated them at the scene. Both were taken to Cadre Memorial Hospital, where they remain in guarded condition...

AMBER
But... that's not true...

CUT TO:

99A INT. MED TECH AREA--DAY

A HUGE SYRINGE is jammed into Richards' bicep. Compressed air SHOOTS something with enough force to jar his muscles.

MED TECH
Fatigue compensator in place.

99B INT. 911 ROOM-- DAY 99B

A SECURITY CHIEF here has the identical medical data on screen.

SECURITY CHIEF
(into mike)
Reading all systems down the line.
Your bird is singing loud and clear.

He smiles at a Propaganda officer.

99C INT. MEDICAL AREA--DAY 99C

MED TECH
(responding to the above)
All systems check out..

CUT TO:

99D INT. AMBER'S APARTMENT--DAY 99D

She's still in shock and comfusion from the broadcast.

NEWSCASTER
And now, back to "Climbing for Dollars"...

RAUCOUS LAUGHTER from the screen makes her look up. The picture CUTS to an EXCITED STUDIO AUDIENCE which watches a man going hand over hand on a rope suspended over a cage of SNARLING DOBERMANS. Outside the cage, a giant clock TICKS... the rope PARTS... the man falls SCREAMING amidst the dogs... pretty girls in kit-kat costumes run up to the cage, throw buckets of water on man and dogs as the audience LAUGHS--

99E AMBER 99E

Reacting as if struck, she SNAPS off the TV. She sits, thoughts racing for a moment. Finally shaking off the mood, she returns to work.

AMBER
(singing)
Then it's time to show love
and it's time to show trust--"

Her voice catches. In angry frustration, she sends sheet music and coffee crashing to the floor.

100 INT. HOLDING TANK--DAY

Richards, bleeding from the "game prep", is tossed back into the tank. He lunges for the door, too late. It hisses closed.

He SMASHES it again and again....

MED TECH
He's wrapped. Knock him out until showtime.

GAS begins to seep into the tank. Richards reacts, trys to get out... slowly sinks to his knees, fighting until consciousness leaves his body... we HEAR a DRUM ROLL...

CUT TO:

101 EXT. NETWORK CENTER TOWER--LONG SHOT TO ESTABLISH--NIGHT

The drum riff CONTINUES OVER--

DON PARDO TYPE
And now, ICS broadcasting proudly presents--The Running Man!

102 INT. GAME STUDIO--NIGHT

As the STUDIO BAND plays, Eager Fans file into the bleachers of the studio auditorium, guided by cute uniformed Network pages. The fans carry home-made signs and banners. Many wear official The Running Man T-shirts and caps. Most are filling out little 3 x 5 cards which the usherettes collect.

DON PARDO TYPE(cont'd)
Starring your Host--Damon Killian! With The Running Man Dancers... Skip Wainwright and his band! Five Time National Champion Captain Freedom!

103 THE GAME SET

As lights COME UP and a full STUDIO ORCHESTRA bursts into an overture. Meanwhile, the show's main title rolls on the big monitor. We see strangely costumed figures in bizarre violent action as titles are supered and still pictures dance around, freeze in brief supers.

DON PARDO VOICE(cont'd)
Plus the one and only Stalkers--Professor SubZero! Dynamo! BuzzSaw--and in his Western Conference debut, Fireball!

CONTINUED

103 CONTINUED - 103

With a burst of light and color, some scantily and erotically clad dancers in the "SOLID GOLD" mold explode on stage, go through wild and sensual gyrations.

(Needless to say, this continuing dance number will form the linchpin of The Running Man MTV video.) The audience APPLAUDS.

103A EXT. NETWORK--LOADING AREA 103A

We can HEAR the continuing broadcast here. Police barricades hold back excited FANS. Suddenly a cry goes up: "Buzzsaw's here...Buzzsaw...Buzzsaw"!

103B AN ARMORED VEHICLE 103B

skids to a halt-- 'TRAINERS' with whips and prods gingerly unlock a gate, LEAP BACK as a SNARLING GIANT springs onto the concrete, howling like a werewolf! He looks around, sees a policeman's CYCLE... snatches it up... PRESSES it overhead!

The fans only LAUGH and CHEER; even the cop is amused! Now, Dynamo heads for the door, but one over-eager TEENAGER slips under a barricade, dances in front of him.

TEENAGER
Hey, hey, Buzzsaw, slice those Runners for me--

The Stalker STRAIGHT-ARMS him out of the way. The kid tumbles backwards, bleeding from his mouth.

TEENAGER
(thrilled, to his pals)
Hey? Did you guys see that? He touched me! Buzzsaw touched me!

104 INT. KILLIAN'S OFFICE--NIGHT 104

As the show opening continues on a MONITOR here, Killian is leaning back in his chair, getting makeup put on. A WARDROBE LADY brushes lint from his jacket.

105 STUDIO LOCKER ROOM--NIGHT 105

Against an out of focus MONITOR here, we see quick SHOTS of strange weapons being cleaned... gauntlets and boots being buckled... helmets being slipped into place... glare paint being spread on cruel cheekbones... all to the TRACK of the show.

Backlit, they march out, nightmarish gladiators.

106 THE GLASS TANK

Richards sits inside it, now dressed in a Running Man coverall. His hands and feet are still manacled.

Suddenly the door snickers open. He looks up. Standing before him are Sven, another guard, and a somber MAN in dark clothing.

DARK MAN
Mr. Richards? It's time.

Sven pulls Richards to his feet and out of the holding tank. The friends and staff of the Stalkers watch indifferently.

DARK MAN
(continuing, to Richards)
I'm your court appointed theatrical agent.

Richards looks at Sven in amazement. The guard shrugs.

SVEN
I only work here.
(harder, pulling him to his feet)
But I love my work.

The Agent clears his throat, opens a fine leather binder, begins reading as they all stride deliberately out of the locker room.

DARK MAN (AGENT)(cont'd)
"Contract dated this day between Benjaman A. Richards (herein after called 'The victim') and Interstat Communications Systems, Herein after called 'The Network'. Section One. Binding nature of this contract on all heirs and assignees of the victim...

CUT TO:

107 INT./EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS--"ROUND ROBIN"--NIGHT

A.) In the BARRIO--

B.) Above the RIVERBED budget ticket "PICADOR AREA"--

C.) At an upscale "RUNNING MAN" big-screen PARTY--

D.) In a strange room where Mic and his rebels UNPACK electronic gear--

CONTINUED

107 CONTINUED - 1

--At all of these places, the tell tale BLUE GLOW of TV screens flick on and the world grinds to a halt, just like it did half a century earlier in the days of Uncle Miltie. Everyone stops to watch The Running Man.

108 INT. 911 ROOM 1

The people here note their screens, which show a milling MOB watching the Barrio public screen.

PROPAGANDA OFFICER
Big crowd tonight...

SECURITY OFFICER
Better there than on the streets...

The others nod knowingly.

109 INT. NETWORK CONTROL ROOM--NIGHT 1

TIGHT on dials reading AUDIENCE RATING. It's broken down into areas: "SOUTHEAST", "WESTERN REGION", "URBAN CORRIDOR", etc. As we watch, all the markers go up into the high 80's percentile.

TONY
Roll the second cart... ready camera two-- Brenda, perform sex on me--

She giggles. The usual show biz bullshit. Meanwhile, the ON AIR monitor shows video clips of Richards, all lifts from his prison escape or his capture at the airport, but now put through jazzy video FX animation.

DON PARDO VOICE(cont'd)
Tonight's special guest Runner is the infamous "Butcher of Bakersfield"...

110 INT. NETWORK CORRIDOR--NIGHT 1

A hallway monitor continues the broadcast.

DON PARDO VOICE(cont'd)
...mass murderer Benjamin Richards! He's here to try his luck in America's favorite pastime!

CAMERA ADJUSTS and we see Amber and another Twupette named AMY are at a vending machine which dispenses "Cadre-Cola".

CONTINUED

110 CONTINUED -

(Killian's picture is on the machine, along with the slogan: "It hits the spot!")

Amy sips between puffs of a designer cigarette, speeding on a caffine jag. Meanwhile, Amber fumbles an aspirin tin from her purse, casting a guilty look at the TV screen.

AMY
Amber, I know you feel lousy, but you are like, so lucky to be alive. I mean--
(pointing to set)
--that guy killed, what, 60, 80 people?

AMBER
Not according to him.

A SOUND makes both women turn--

111 CORRIDOR--NEW ANGLE

Coming along from the other direction is Richards and his entourage. The funereal little group casts long shadows as they slowly move from one pool of light to another.

AGENT
(reading)
"Quid pro quo, pari passau. b) Quid pro quo, para passau. Revenue from ancillary markets shall similarly be distributed quid pro quo, para passau.

112 BACK TO SCENE

Amber watches, face pale, as they come abrest of her and then pass by. Richards and Amber make brief, intent eye contact. Nothing is said; but volumes are communicated.

AGENT(cont'd)
(reading)
"A priori, conflicts between your Estate and the Network shall be abjudicated by a licensed Cadre abritrator..."

Then they're in the elevator and out of sight.

CONTINUED

112 CONTINUED -

AMY
Boy. You're lucky he didn't kill you, too. Or rape you and kill you. Or kill you, then rape you. I mean, a guy like that, what would stop him?

113 CLOSE ON AMBER

Puzzled by the same contradiction.

AMBER
Yeah... what would?

Struck by a thought, she turns.

AMBER
(distracted)
Look,. Amy, I have to pass on that drink... I just remembered I've got some paperwork... I'll catch you tomorrrow.

And she hustles off, leaving her friend looking puzzled.

INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

The Running Man band (all girls save the leader) lay on the trumpets. The dancers continue, hot and sexy... suddenly a SPOTLIGHT sweeps across the audience, finds its target in the back of the studio.

DON PARDO VOICE(cont'd)
And now, here's the Producer of The Game and everybody's favorite showman... Damon Killian!

Damon Killian materializes in the spotlight, grins, runs down the aisle towards the stage. The audience reaction would please The Pope.

Killian bounds onto the stage, moves amidst the dancers. He "fakes" a few steps, pretends to stumble, an excuse for some grabass with the girls. The audience LAUGHS and the dancers do a big finish. A laser "APPLAUSE" sign blinks, floating in mid-air over the center of the studio.

CONTINUED

114 CONTINUED - 114

KILLIAN
Thank you, Skip. I just want to (X)
tell you I don't think I ever heard (X)
you and the band ever sound better, (X)
and I think it's a damn shame. (X)
(laugh)

115 INT. NETWORK--ENTRANCE TO 911 ROOM--NIGHT 115

The guard on duty is watching the show on an O.S. screen.

KILLIAN'S VOICE
(from TV)
You'll have to clap louder, they're all tone deaf. Just kidding! We've got a hell of a show for you tonight...

Amber appears here. She takes a deep breath, composes herself. She flashes her Network ID at the guard. Preoccupied, he waves her on... she's in.

6 INT. RUNNING MAN STUDIO--BACKSTAGE 1

Richards and his escort appear here.

AGENT
(reading)
"Res judicata, res ispsa loquitur, ad infinitum for cassettes, videotapes, bubble chips, and all other methods of recordings known or unknown".

They stop and the agent holds the contract towards Richards.

AGENT(cont'd)
Sign here.

Richards sighs...takes the pen! But there's nowhere to write. The Agent turns around, presents his back. Richards dutifully signs... and then with a gesture like a bank customer, he JAMS the pen straight into the Agent's back! The AGENT HOWLS, runs off, the impaled contracts FLAPPING.

CONTINUED

116 CONTINUED - 116

RICHARDS
(pleasant, calling after)
Don't forget to send me a copy...

Sven turns his head away. Was there a twinkle of stern amusement there? Richards isn't sure, because now the guard's hold him, wait for his cue.

117 ON STAGE 117

Killian has moved to the edge of the stage.

KILLIAN
(towards the front row)
Mrs. Mcardle. How are you? Give me a kiss. No tongue! (X) (X)

A spotlight picks out MRS. MCARDLE, an elderly but lively woman. She giggles as Killian kisses her hand, then returns to the stage.

KILLIAN
(to the audience)
My biggest fan, ladies and gentlemen... she's followed me faithfully for ten years and I don't even owe her alimony!
(over laughter, to his announcer)
Phil, you wanna introduce tonight's guest Runner?

DON PARDO TYPE
You bet, Damon.

Music comes UP and OVER.

DON PARDO TYPE(cont'd)
Our star Runner tonight needs no introduction: He's Ben Richards-- the brutal slayer of 60 men women and children in the Bakersfield Massacre! Here's a clip of that horrible event!

118 MAIN MONITOR (STOCK & 'CHOPPER MOCK UP) 118

We see a crowd from the air... shots of helicopters.

COMMAND VOICE
This is Dispatch, calling Eagle One. Come in, Eagle One.

119 INT. COPTOR COCKPIT

Richards, a chin mike obscuring his mouth, responds. The CO-PILOT beside him listens with growing agitation.

RICHARDS
This is Eagle One. I'm above the crowd. They are unarmed. Repeat, unarmed. Beginning attack. Beginning attack.

COMMAND VOICE
Eagle one, you are violating a direct order! Eagle one, do you copy?

RICHARDS
Bullshit! I'll do it my way!

The co-pilot struggles with Richards, who PUNCHES him senseless. Then Richards throws the craft into a dive.

120 RICHARDS--IN THE WINGS

His face scornful, he silently watches the continuing "drama".

121 MONITOR SCREEN--QUICK CUTS (STOCK)

A) FLEEING AND SCREAMING PEOPLE--

B) FIRING 'COPTER CANNON--

C) RICHARDS AT THE CONTROLS, INTERCUT WITH ABOVE--

D) BURNING CAR WRECKS AND HOUSES--

E) A 'COPTER TURNING AWAY, FLYING OFF--

COMMAND VOICE
Attention all units. We have a renegade. We have a renegade.

The screen goes DARK. A SPOTLIGHT picks out Killian, who speaks in hushed tones.

KILLIAN
We all know the aftermath. Grieving parents... orphaned children... a nation shocked to its very core. After that holocaust, Ben Richards was court-martialed and sentenced to a lifetime at hard labor...
(MORE)

CONTINUED

121 CONTINUED -

KILLIAN (Cont'd)
but we knew that our audience demands more from Justice, and more from us... it took time, and money and a busload of lawyers, but--
(grander)
here he is, in the flesh, ready to pay the price for our home audience! The Butcher of Bakersfield, in person!

122 NEW ANGLE

The house lights COME UP. Richards is hustled out on the stage by Sven and other guards. MUSIC RISES and the "Stalkette" dancers gyrate alongside the little group.

The AUDIENCE ROARS its communal hatred and venom.

CUT TO:

123 911 ROOM--NIGHT

Amber comes in, unnoticed by the Security and Propaganda techs here; half of them are pulling the night shift, and the others are watching The Running Man.

As it continues in the background, Amber makes her way towards an adjacent room marked EYES ONLY DATABANKS--CLEARANCE REQUIRED.

KILLIAN
(on monitors)
Well, there he is. He could have gone to prison to pay his penalty... but instead, he's a volunteer for The Running Man... ready to risk everything for a chance at our valuable prizes... like a trial by jury... a suspended sentence... or who knows? Maybe even a full pardon, like our previous winners, Whitman, Price, and Haddad!

The MONITOR SCREEN shows PORTRAITS of these worthies, posing in a tropical setting--

KILLIAN
They're basking in the Maui sun, their debt to society paid in full!

124 INT. EYES ONLY ROOM--NIGHT

Amber comes in here. We can HEAR the broadcast from outside as she opens a file drawer.

Inside are ranks and ranks of stiff cards, each marking a microcassette like the ones we saw earlier in her apartment.

She finally finds finds what she wants: POLICE SURVEILLANCE VIDEOS. Checking to make sure she's unobserved, she leafs through the cards...

125 INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

As the dancers leap and bound around them, Sven and the guards drag Richards towards a strange chair, force him into it. Automatic BINDINGS LOCK him in. The guards undo the old manacles as Killian steps closer.

KILLIAN
Ben, I know you're just itching to get out in the Game Zone and show us the same determination you used up in Bakersfield--
(hoots from the crowd)
But first we have a little surprise for you....

Richards reacts, wary. The audience shifts in their seats, interested, equally unprepared.

KILLIAN(cont'd)
We all know you're a big, tough guy, Ben, but that doesn't mean you're a loner, because it takes a big man to admit he needs his friends. And speaking of friends, Ben, see if you recognize these voices:

A SPOTLIGHT spills over the darkness behind the wall, illuminating two rounded metal SHAPES. Richards looks at them suspiciously as they begin to slowly REVOLVE and DESCEND.

WEISS'S VOICE
(filtered, O.S.)
Let me out of this thing--

LAUGHLIN'S VOICE
--you're all a bunch of fascist thugs-- your days are numbered--

The SPHERES continue their move, and now we see that they are two rocketsled chairs, identical to Richards! Inside them are Weiss and Laughln, both in official Running Man coveralls!

CONTINUED

125 CONTINUED -

KILLIAN
You're right, Ben! It's your two buddies from Central Security Prison, Harold Weiss and William Laughlin! We didn't want to break up a winning team, so here they are, ready to go for broke right by your side!

126 thru 127 OMITTED

128 RICHARDS

As the audience APPLAUDS, he looks at Weiss and Laughlin, and then at Killian with pure unadultered hatred.

129 INT. EYES ONLY ROOM--NIGHT

Amber closes one drawer, frustrated. Opens another... reacts with hope. She's found--

130 INSERT--DRAWER

It's marked POLICE SURVEILLANCE VIDEOS--HELICOPTER UNITS.

CUT TO:

131 IN THE STUDIO

Killian feels Richard's hatred, laughs it off.

KILLIAN
Susie, it's time to escort our Runners to the starting line! Let's go!

SUSIE--a simpering model--waltzes out of the wings, activates a glitzy control, moving it to the first of two positions. Weiss and Laughlin's chairs DESCEND with a jerk to the lowest possible position; Richards chair begins to CHUG along a track in the floor. The "Stalkettes" dance beside it.

KILLIAN
(during this)
You viewers and our home audience all know the rules...

132 ANGLE ON SUSIE

She poses fetchingly beside an illuminated MAP, using a glittery pointer to mark the items Killian mentions.

KILLIAN (cont'd)
The Game Zone is 400 square blocks left over from the big 'quake back in '97. We all remember that one... I was in bed making love to my wife when the 'quake hit and it was scary... (X)
and it almost woke the wife up.... (X)
(rim shot)
Once inside, the Runners must race through all four Game Quads in three hours or less, and they'll need every second, because you know who's on their tail--

AUDIENCE
(on cue, in unison)
----THE STALKERS!

KILLIAN
--and you know what happens then--

AUDIENCE
(happy, in unison)
--ANYTHING GOES!

KILLIAN
And now, without further ado... let's start running! On your marks! Get set--

The chairs all LURCH a bit, VIBRATE. Killian takes the control in hand. STAGE EFFECTS reach a CRESCENDO. Richards catches Killian's eye with a LOOK that commands attention.

RICHARDS
Killian. I'll be back.

KILLIAN
(off-mike, unperturbed)
Only in a rerun...
(hitting control)
GO!

133 NEW ANGLE

With an ear-splitting ROAR, Richards' chair ROCKETS forward into a waiting tunnel! A split second later, Laughlin and Weiss WHOOSH drop out of sight beneath the floor!

134 WITH WEISS

Acceleration smashes him into his seat. The chair zooms down a gleaming tunnel, rocking side to side.

135 LAUGHLIN

Going through the same agony.

136 RICHARDS

Unmoving, stoic, his chair turns 180 degrees, hurtles on.

137 INT. CONTROL ROOM

The crew watches this with little excitement: they've seen it a hundred times.

137A INT. 911 ROOM--NIGHT

A security tech watchs a computer screen showing the position of the chairs. A steadily beeping CURSOR indicates Richards.

INT. EYES ONLY ROOM--NIGHT

Amber is leafing through the cards holding the micro casettes. Then she reacts; she's found it.

139 IN THE DRAWER--HER POV

The card indicates this section is BAKERSFIELD MASSACRE-- BLACK BOX CAMERA FOOTAGE.

But there are two tapes. One is marked RAW FOOTAGE. The other is marked EDITED FOR BROADCAST.

140 BACK TO SCENE

CAMERA PUSHES IN on Amber as she takes these in hand... looks from one to another... and realizes what it means.

CUT TO:

141 EXT. L.A. RIVERBED--NIGHT

Heavily padded "PICADORS" stand ready beside a heavy metal net. They react to an off screen WHINE and SCRAPING NOISE...

CONTINUED

141 CONTINUED - 14

and then one by one, the rocket chairs zoom out of the tubes, slam into the net!

142 INT. STUDIO--NIGHT 14

Susie has handed Killian a 3 x 5 card.

KILLIAN
(reading card)
Edith Wiggins, COME ON DOWN!

A spotlight picks out an excited WOMAN and she runs down the aisle. The audience APPLAUDS. Edith is helped on stage by the models. Immediately she kisses Killian.

KILLIAN
Whoa, Edith, looks like you're doing some stalking yourself!
(over LAUGHTER)
Seriously, Edith, who's it going to be? What brave Stalker do we pick to go boldly into no-man's land, a lonely hero facing three desparate criminals?

The band begins a "tick-tocky" metronome beat. Edith purses her lips, examining the highest section of the set, where several panels are blazoned with big question marks.

143 IN THE BARRIO 14

A big betting board is here. Instead of "Win-place-show" it has sections for "First Stalk", First Blood", "First Death" and "Final Stalk."

Excited BARRIO FANS press against this, waving money, buying chances from HUSTLERS who run back and forth like assistants at an auction. Ad-lib SHOUTS of different Stalker's names accompany rapidly changing odds on the board. Suddenly the "tick-tock" MUSIC from the screen ENDS and the hustlers FREEZE the betting.

KILLIAN
(on screen)
Time's...up!

EDITH
(on screen)
Gee... they're all so good, I don't know....
(MORE)

CONTINUED

143 CONTINUED - 14

EDITH (cont'd)
My husband and my little boy have their favorites but, well, I like my men big and cuddly...
(scattered LAUGHTER)
I guess I have to pick...SubZero!

SHOUTS from the First Stalk "winners" here. Money exchanges hands--

144 STUDIO--SAME TIME 144

KILLIAN
We're looking for... (X)
(pointing a la Richard Dawson)
SUBZERO!

One of the panels rotates with a "ding" and we see SubZero's face and costume logo.

DON PARDO TYPE
And now... our first Stalker of the evening... a three time Cadre trophy champion with over thirty lifetime kills... let's welcome the Incredible Ice man... Professor SubZero!

In the band, someone smacks an ORIENTAL GONG--

145 SUBZERO--CLOSE UP 14

As a lightbeam picks him out and he bows theatrically to the audience, 350 pounds of death!

AUDIENCE
(a rising CHANT)
SubZero... SubZero...SubZero--!

Shouting a WAR CRY, SubZero flings some ninja dust to the floor, DISAPPEARS to cheers.

146 IN THE LOCKER ROOM 14

There's cliques of Stalker sycophants here... agents, managers, girlfriends, DYNAMO'S MOTHER, etc. One-- a BLONDE GEISHA-- grins at her darling on screen, inhales blue smoke from a long pipe.

147 EXT. LA RIVERBED--NIGHT 14

The TRAFFIC PICADOR here listens to his buzzing earphone.

TRAFFIC PICADOR
(listening, into throat mike)
It's who? Oh, SubZero. Great. I had fifty bucks on him.

He turns as the foot picadors finish releasing the Runners from the chairs, signals his team with flashlights like an Aircraft deck officer.

148 THE RIVERBED WALLS 14

We HEAR the broadcast here from an offstage SCREEN. The river walls below the rim are lined with billboards like the ones around a soccer field, advertising the products associated with the show. (Prominent is one of Killian.) Above these signs are some bleachers, filled with blood-crazed, drunken fans in the "cheap seats."

Some of them scramble over the wall a bit, flinging empty beer cans down along with their jeers and curses.

BELOW 14

Richards and Laughlin get their sea legs, stand... but Weiss remains in his seat, ashen-faced, paralyzed with fear. Richards and Laughlin go over to him while a CYCLE PICADOR rears up. He wears NIGHT VISION GOGGLES and a throat amplifier.

PICADOR
(eerie, amplified)
Runners! Start moving!
(waving flashlights)
That way!

RICHARDS
Weiss, come on. The joyride's over... Weiss?

WEISS
I... I... can't move... dizzy... I'm scared--

LAUGHLIN
We're all scared, man. That's why we need to stick together. Give me your hand--

150 CYCLE PICADOR

Leans out on his bike with a strange ROD--

151 BACK TO SCENE

Richards recoils as the pneumatic SHAFT strikes him with terrific force. He turns in fury, but then another Picador skids in behind him on another bike, repeats the attack! Laughlin makes a lunge for one of the foot picadors, gets hit by a rod for his trouble!

CYCLE PICADOR
Start running! Final warning!

Richards leans in close to Weiss.

RICHARDS
Weiss. Get up and start moving or I'll kill you myself.

Weiss snaps out of it, looks at Richards... who winks! Weiss smiles weakly, gets out aided by his friends.

LAUGHLIN
Fritz. I thought you were gonna find your brother--

RICHARDS
I thought you were going into politics.

LAUGHLIN
(with a savage grin)
This is politics.

And they run.

152 BLEACHERS ABOVE

Up there, they cheer--

153 INT. EYES ONLY ROOM--NIGHT

WIDEN from Amber as she looks around carefully, slowly begins to put two microcasettes back into the drawer... suddenly a HAND grabs hers at the wrist! She gasps, turns to see--

154 MILITIA OFFICER--HER POINT OF VIEW

He smiles, twisting Amber's wrist, then grabbing her by the body. As other OFFICERS step closer, trapping Amber, we

CUT TO:

155 INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

Killian looks up at the big monitor, where CAPTAIN FREEDOM is visible in the locker room. A robust ex-jock, he looks out of place in his ICS blazer. But he laughs at a joke from FireBall, who is bare chested and getting his wrists strapped up.

CAP
Damon, here in the locker room, there's a lot of excitement here, a lot of adreneline. The Stalkers know there's 400 square blocks of game Zone out there, and anything can happen in the next three hours. I remember once when I was in the Playoffs defending my title--

KILLIAN
(interrupting)
Sorry, Cap, I've just been informed that the Runners have entered the first of our four Quads! Let's go there now, live!

156 EXT. ICE RINK--IN THE ZONE

The Picadors harry and bully the three men right through a dark archway... a metal door CLANGS SHUT behind them...

157 INT. ICE RINK

The three men walk through gloom, cautious. Richards realizes he can see his own breath.

RICHARDS
Cold in here...

158 THE RED CARPET

Beneath their feet, it ROLLS UP as they pass...

159 BACK TO SCENE

Seeing something glimmering, Laughlin darts ahead, grabs it. It's an old rusted pair of ice skates!

LAUGHLIN
What the hell--

Suddenly the HOUSE LIGHTS COME UP. All three men wince in the glare--

160 REVERSE ANGLE

Now they see where they are: In the center of an ice rink. A CLANG comes from the door where they entered. There, a WALL drops down, topped with concertina wire. More of the same stuff gleams all around the rink.

161 SUBZERO

Suddenly skates into view to the CRASH of a gong. He's dressed in an outfit that's half Shogun Warrior, half hockey player. A hockey stick dangles over his shoulder. He draws it like a Samauri sword, winds up... swings--

162 THE RUNNERS

They duck as a puck comes zooming in, SLAMMING into the wooden wall behind them, then EXPLODING.

The Runners are knocked off their feet. Smoke curls around the ice near the hole in the wall.

WEISS
Richards. You got any strategy?

RICHARDS
Yes.
(pause)
Haul ass.

And they split in three directions.

163 AUTOMATIC CAMERAS

Perched above the concertina wire that hems them in, they pan to follow their every move.

164 THE RUNNING MAN STUDIO AUDIENCE

Like the folks in the I LOVE L.A. video of forty years earlier... they love it!

165 CLOSE ON EDITH

As the people in the rows around her pat her on the back, congratulate her on her austute choice of SubZero. A smiling Killian helps Susie the model hand gifts to Edith.

CONTINUED

165 CONTINUED - 165

KILLIAN
--a pocket sized ICS video monitor... SuperPerm auto wax... and the home version of The Running Man for the whole family! Thank you, Edith!

166 INT. PAN PACIFIC AUDITORIUM--NIGHT 166

Another EXPLODING PUCK just misses Laughlin, who DIVES FORWARD out of the way, skidding hard into the wall that descended where they entered.

167 RICHARDS 167

He dives in from the side, trying to tackle the Stalker-- but SubZero sees him in time, spins on his skates--SLAMS him with the hockey stick!

168 RICHARDS 168

Blood blossoms on his forehead and he reels backwards, smashing into Laughlin.

169 "ROUND ROBIN"--VARIOUS LOCATIONS 169

A) As "fans" of all classes chant both "FIRST BLOOD" and "DOUBLE HIT" with glee.

B) Mic and his comrades watch, dismayed, still in that hard-to-recognize location....

C) In the STUDIO, Killian narrates the obvious to the boisterous AUDIENCE--

KILLIAN
There it is... first blood... a lot of happy bettors out there tonight... and SubZero does it again, a double hit!

170 IN THE ICE RINK 170

As his partners stagger, Weiss gets hit with the hockey stick, slides across the ice, lies dazed.

171 SUBZERO 171

Sees this, tosses a puck ahead of himself on the ice... skates forward, grinning...

172 RICHARDS AND LAUGHLIN

Hurt themselves, across the rink, they see this... and then Richards sees the rolled up red carpet in its niche nearby.

RICHARDS
Here--!

Understanding immediately, Laughlin grabs one end, Richards the other... they strain... the wooden pins CRACK... both men swing the roll once, twice, then HEAVE IT--

173 WEISS

Looks up and sees SubZero bearing down on him--

174 THE CARPET ROLL

Soars through the air, unrolling red fabric--

175 WIDER

The roll bounces in front of SubZero, who can't stop-- his skates hang up on the fabric-- he tumbles head over heels, SLAMS into the sidelines!

176 CLOSE ON SUBZERO

SubZero starts to get up... suddenly Laughlin LOOMS over him, hockey stick in hand! SubZero rolls out of the way, gets a grazing hit just the same! He gets to his feet, ROARS angrily!

Laughlin circles him, feinting, enjoying the role reversal...

177 RICHARDS

rushes in, catches SubZero on the blind side, PUNCHES HIM-- the big Stalker SKIDS backwards on his skates-- then he sees

178 THE EXPLODING PUCK

Still waiting on the ice--

179 BACK TO SCENE

He snatches it up, FLINGS it towards Laughlin, who gets blown into the wall! He hangs there on splintered boards, stunned!

180 SUBZERO

With a savage laugh, he yanks two short SAMAURI BLADES from their sheathes, skates forward!

181 RICHARDS

Like Weiss, too far away to help... then he sees--

182 CONCERTINA WIRE--ABOVE HIS HEAD--HIS P.O.V.

183 BACK TO SCENE

Richards RIPS a scrap from the rug on the ice, wraps his hands in it... he grabs the wire, PULLS with all his strength--

184 SUBZERO

Races in towards his helpless victim--

185 THE CONCERTINA WIRE

A section of it FALLS DOWN onto the ice--

186 RICHARDS

Wincing, he WHIP SNAPS the wire, blood seeping through the cloth on his hands--

187 SUBZERO

Knifes raised, zooming towards Laughlin...AND THEN THE WIRE BOUNCES IN HIS PATH AND HE HITS IT, SCREAMING--

188 ANOTHER ANGLE

Laughlin ducks aside as SubZero rolls and bounces by, wire twisting around him, blood streaking the ice--

189 RICHARDS

Whips the end of wire around a post, STRAINS--

190 SUBZERO

The wire around his throat JERKS TAUT. We HEAR his NECK BREAK.

191 WIDER 191

Richards staggers into view, followed by Laughlin. Richards looks around, spots a CAMERA.

RICHARDS
Poor SubZero. He's just plain zero...

The others grin despite their exhaustion... then CLOUDS OF NOXIOUS GAS hiss out of the ceiling. The entrance OPENS with a hiss.

Coughing, the three Runners stagger towards the entrance, Laughlin hanging on firmly to SubZero's hockey stick.

CUT TO:

192 "ROUND ROBIN" VARIOUS LOCATIONS 192

As people react to the unprecedented death of a Stalker in The Game.

We see shock... dismay...

Bettors angrily tearing up tickets...

And that little boy at the party. Holding his SubZero doll, he bursts into tears. His mother tries to console him. The CAMERA tightens on his dead hero dangling in the concertina wire--

193 THE LOCKER ROOM 193

Consternation and dismay, needless to say.

The blonde geisha wipes away a tear... goes back to her opium pipe.

194 KILLIAN 194

Onstage, he looks... surprised? Or can it be...pleased?

KILLIAN
(to the audience)
Ladies and Gentlemen, this is... this is just horrible. Words can't express what we're all feeling now... a great Champion fallen...we... we'll be right back, after this important message.

CONTINUED

194 CONTINUED - 194

The stage lights dim. Killian loosens his collar, rushes into the wings, where Brenda has borrowed a tech's earphone and is listening with a growing smile.

KILLIAN
Well, Well?

BRENDA
Ratings just jumped eight points right across the board...
(listening)
Make that nine points.

KILLIAN
I fuckin love that guy... (X)

He heads for the make-up people. She grabs his arm.

BRENDA
Want another surprise? Remember the girl who was with Richards at the airport?

KILLIAN
I remember. She had a cute ass. (X)

BRENDA
This is cuter. They just caught her downstairs. She was pulling the Bakersfield video.

Killian reacts, smiling with a new idea.

KILLIAN
Sensational! (X)

195 MONITORS--CLOSE 195

An ARM WRESTLING TABLE FADES IN. Two Stalkers in full regalia are there: They're Dynamo, and the late lamented SubZero. As they struggle, Killian enters the SHOT.

KILLIAN
Those two guys, they just can't stop competing. I'm getting thirsty, just watching them... but in my line of work, I can't risk that filled up feeling...
(holding up can)
...that's why I drink Cadre Cola...
(smiling)
It hits the spot!

200 INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

The film clip ENDS, and we see that Killian has moved into the front rows of the studio, where he stands beside a spectacled, nervous BALD MAN.

KILLIAN
(reading a card)
Leon--it's Leon, isn't it? I know this is a hard time for you, for all of us. Can you help us, Leon? Can you help us with this critical choice... Whose the next Stalker I send out?

LEON
I... I don't know... I think maybe Dynamo, but BuzzSaw, well, he was last season's champion... I can't decide...

KILLIAN
Then don't decide, Leon. Hard decisions call for hard solutions...
(upbeat)
And here's two hardasses to step in and take charge! You wanted them, Leon, you got 'em-- BUZZSAW AND DYNAMO!

Suddenly the stage goes crazy with floor effects. Lights flash. Smoke pots go off. PINSPOTS stab out, illuminating two APPROACHING HIDEOUS SEMI- HUMAN SHAPES. The fans ROAR and the lights come up FULL. The old upbeat Killian grins, SHOUTS.

KILLIAN
Phil! Tell our audience about this champion tag team!

201 CLOSE ON THE NEW STALKERS 201

BUZZSAW is a good ol' boy, a chainsaw massacre direct from Texas.

DON PARDO TYPE
Let's give a down home welcome to BuzzSaw Eddie Bitowski, last season's leading Stalker and a nominee for the Cadre Hall of Fame. BuzzSaw's Hammond & Cates sawblades are made of Tri-lon coated durasteel and can cut through six inches of metal plate.

BuzzSaw smiles. He raises his arms, thumbs a hand control. His blades CHATTER into action.

197 CONTINUED - 19

CAP
(on screen)
Damon, there's a lot of dismay down here, a lot of shock. But I have to say...this observer isn't really surprised. When I was a Stalker, we used nothing but our bare hands and our skill. Now? They're dragging around 50 pounds of equipment. And when an athlete relies on props and gadgets, sooner or later they're going to let him down.

198 BACK TO SCENE 198

KILLIAN
(a bit puzzled)
Ah, thank you... Cap, for that ah, fascinating commentary.

Captain Freedom disappears on the monitor. Killian moves downstage.

KILLIAN
I guess The Cap is saying the same thing I am. Tonight the world lost a great competitor... and I... I lost a good friend. I'd like you all to join me, now in a tribute to one of the greatest Stalkers that ever lived... SubZero.

The lights dim. The crowd looks respectfully at--

199 BIG MONITOR SCREEN 199

It lights up as maudlin MUSIC PLAYS. We see SubZero's body, laying in Stage in the ice rink, a circle of candles around it. The body is covered with a draped American flag. (The stripes are the same, but the canton's stars have been replaced by an eagle over the globe.)

Now new images DISSOLVE through this. We see STILLS of the living SubZero, both in and out of Stalker uniform. SubZero with his family... SubZero signing a plaster cast on a little girl's arm... SubZero with a puppy, etc.

200 INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

The film clip ENDS, and we see that Killian has moved into the front rows of the studio, where he stands beside a spectacled, nervous BALD MAN.

KILLIAN
(reading a card)
Leon--it's Leon, isn't it? I know this is a hard time for you, for all of us. Can you help us, Leon? Can you help us with this critical choice... the name of the man we'll pick to mete out Justice?

LEON
I... I don't know... I think maybe Dynamo, but BuzzSaw, well, he was last season's champion... I can't decide...

KILLIAN
Then don't decide, Leon. Hard decisions call for hard solutions...
(upbeat)
And here's two hardasses to step in and take charge! You wanted them, Leon, you got 'em-- BUZZSAW AND DYNAMO!

Suddenly the stage goes crazy with floor effects. Lights flash. Smoke pots go off. PINSPOTS stab out, illuminating two APPROACHING HIDEOUS SEMI- HUMAN SHAPES. The fans ROAR and the lights come up FULL. The old upbeat Killian grins, SHOUTS.

KILLIAN
Phil! Tell our audience about this champion tag team!

201 CLOSE ON THE NEW STALKERS

BUZZSAW is a good ol' boy, a chainsaw massacre direct from Texas.

DON PARDO TYPE
Let's give a down home welcome to BuzzSaw Eddie Bitowski, last season's leading Stalker and a nominee for the Cadre Hall of Fame. BuzzSaw's Hammond & Cates sawblades are made of Tri-lon coated durasteel and can cut through six inches of metal plate.

BuzzSaw smiles. He raises his arms, thumbs a hand control. His blades CHATTER into action.

CONTINUED

201 CONTINUED -

He turns, facing a propped up timber that has conveniently appeared... slices through it with one clean swipe! As it THUDS onto the stage floor in two sections, the audience gives a REBEL YELL.

202 DYNAMO

Already an impressive juggernaut in his filligree armor, he gilds the lily now and ACTIVATES his power pack and his suit LIGHTS UP with twinkling accents all over... he's the Close Encounters mothership on two legs.

But Dynamo isn't just a light show: He's a, well, he's a dynamo, and now he SLAPS a control and CRACKLING ARCS OF ELECTRICITY LEAP between his upraised power gauntlets!

DON PARDO TYPE VOICE
BuzzSaw's teammate for Level Two of tonight's run is Mr. Energy himself, Dynamo. Voted most popular Stalker by the readers of Fatal magazine, his dual Wainwright energizers could illuminate downtown Santa Fe for thirty-six minutes... but he's safe and secure in his insulated boots by Breakaway!

Dynamo whirls, AIMS a bolt of miniature lightning at a prepared metal framework, which then LIGHTS UP with the words "CLAP IF YOU LOVE THE RUNNING MAN."

203 THE AUDIENCE

They go over the edge into madness. Stomping their feet, screaming, pulling their hair... it's a Billy Graham revival meeting and a Springsteen concert rolled into one.

They begin that chant again, continuing it throughout the scene:

AUDIENCE
(in unison)
Dynamo...BuzzSaw! Dynamo... BuzzSaw!
Dynamo...BUZZSAW!

204 IN THE LOCKER ROOM 204

FireBall shouts at the screen.

FIREBALL
Let's go, brothers! Win one for the Zero!

Angry shouts from the retinues here agree. But The Cap isn't listening; he's off in a corner, where he swallows a pill, tosses away the paper cup. Suddenly his eyes lock on--

205 HIS OWN PICTURE 205

Posing in his former glory...

206 ON STAGE 206

Killian whirls onstage near the Stalkers, stabs a finger towards Richards' image on the screen.

KILLIAN
GO GET HIM, STALKERS! GO OUT AND BRING THOSE BASTARDS DOWN!

The Stalkers exit triumphantly.

207 EXT. GAME ZONE--NIGHT 207

A wall here is painted with a big "QUAD #2". Richards, Weiss and Laughlin pause for breath here. Richards looks around.

RICHARDS
It's clear... come on--

Laughlin follows but Weiss lingers behind.

LAUGHLIN
Weiss. What is it?

WEISS
(pointing)
Those camera relays...

208 CAMERA RELAYS--HIS POV 208

A dish on the side of the camera points further into the Game Zone.

WEISS' VOICE(cont'd)
They point into the Zone, not up.

209 BACK TO SCENE 209

RICHARDS
Who gives a damn?

Weiss looks at the camera again, runs off, preoccupied. His team mates look at each other, puzzled, move to catch up.

210 EXT. NETWORK--LOADING AREA 210

The fans here CHEER as BuzzSaw and Dynamo head into action. BuzzSaw's white painted Harley has a rebel flag and fringe on it; Dynamo has a 4 wheel drive.

211 INT. STUDIO 211

Killain signals for quiet.

KILLIAN
Thank you... thank you... I know it's been an exciting show so far, full of shock and surprises. So we thought, why not one more? Ladies and Gentlemen, please welcome our mystery contestant--!

MUSIC comes up. A spotlight picks out a FIGURE as Sven shoves her onto the stage.

It's Amber, dressed in a lowcut Gamester's coverall!

KILLIAN
Here she is, Amber Mendes!
(over laughter)
Amber, I understand you're single and you hail from the Westside.
(to the audience)
Not surprisingly, she's flaunted the law and traditional morality all of her life...

AMBER
Oh, right-- go ahead-- tell some lies about me--

KILLIAN
(taking her cue)
Phil?

CONTINUED

211 CONTINUED - 2.

DON PARDO TYPE
In her teenage years, our contestant bought alcohol and cigarettes while still under age. Later, she cheated on college exams... had sexual relationships with two, sometimes three different men in a year. She wrote bad checks, used illegal substances at parties, and cheated on her expense account.

Amber listens to this with an odd expression of dismay and, yes, guilt!

DON PARDO TYPE(cont'd)
And then she met Mad dog Ben Richards... her confederate... her lover!

AMBER
(gratefully shouting)
That one's a lie--!

212 CLOSE ON MONITOR 212

Showing her apartment, strands of sheet still hanging from the exercise machine.

DON PARDO TYPE(cont'd)
Here's the apartment they shared, where they played sick and sadistic games of sexual bondage... the bathroom where the authorities found his facial hairs in her razor...

The picture changes to an infra-red shot of her bed. Two human SHAPES glow on it.

DON PARDO TYPE(cont'd)
--the bedroom where they planned their crimes in the heat of sex!

213 ON AMBER 213

Overwhelmed by the video, the screaming crowd, Killian's laughter. As the BAND strikes up a tune, Sven straps her into the rocket chair.

Killian throws her a little salute... a BUZZER rings... a SMOKE POT goes off...

CONTINUED

213 CONTINUED -

KILLIAN
Now, let's reunite our two little lovebirds!

Killian hits the control--

214 THE ROCKET CHAIR

Whooshes into the tunnel and is out of sight.

215 INT. ROCKET CHUTE--(MODEL AND PROCESS)

Amber SCREAMS as she rocks side to side and upside down.

216 THE ZONE

CAMERA TRACKS Dynamo and Fireball as they rumble along in their nightmare vehicles...

217 GAME ZONE--NIGHT

Weiss runs into the SHOT, smiles as he sees another relay dish. He follows the signal in his mind, looks ahead to the next position--suddenly a HAND drops on to his shoulder.

218 NEW ANGLE

Weiss nearly jumps out of his skin. But it's Richards. Laughlin is a few steps behind him.

RICHARDS
You want to tell us what's going on?

WEISS
(pointing)
All the relays are the same... they point to the middle of the game zone.
(pause)
Don't you get it? Sooner or later, they all have to connect.
(turning)
That means the uplink to the Network Satellite is--that way.

LAUGHLIN
That's why Mic's people couldn't find it. Nobody ever comes in here.

CONTINUED

218 CONTINUED - 218

WEISS
(pleased)
Well, we did. Do you know what this means? We can find that uplink--break the code--

Richards looks at his friends with astonishment as they forget their danger, continue on this tangent.

LAUGHLIN
We get that to Mic, the underground can jam the Network!

RICHARDS
You can jam it up your ass! Forget this crazy plan-- you're just going to get us all killed! Now we agreed to stick together amd get out of this mess... so let's go!

He storms off in another direction. Weiss looks hurt, but follows the relays. Laughlin hesitates... follows Weiss.

219 RICHARDS 219

Ignoring their actions, he runs forward a few steps... but his heart isn't in it as much as he'd like to think.

He stops, looks back...

RICHARDS
Shit!

And he turns back, runs after his friends.

220 INT. KILLIAN'S OFFICE 220

Killian's getting his make up touched up while he uses the phone.

KILLIAN
(patiently)
Okay, so a Stalker died... it had to happen sooner or later. I mean, this is a contact sport...
(listening)
Look, you guys at Justice can't have it both ways. You wanted ratings? You wanted people in front of their sets instead of in picket lines?
(MORE)

CONTINUED

220 CONTINUED - 22

KILLIAN (cont'd)
You don't get that with reruns of Gilligan's Island.
(pause)
Gilligan's Island. The one with the boat? Yeah, right.

He hangs up.

KILLIAN
(to himself, exasperated)
Politicians... How the fuck do they ever hold a job? (X) (X)
(to makeup man)
Sol, would it be a great inconvenience to mop me up? Thank you, Sol. (X) (X)

221 EXT. ABANDONED BUILDING--GAME ZONE 22

Laughlin and Weiss are examining another relay dish which is attached to an abandoned building.

LAUGHLIN
(breathless, pleased)
You called it, Weiss... we're getting close...

Richards runs up.

RICHARDS
Getting close to me punching you out. Can we get serious now and start moving--

Suddenly a SOUND startles all of them. It's come from the nearby building. They look at each other, then carefully move inside, alert. Laughlin holds SubZero's hockey puck, ready to swing.

221A INT. 911 ROOM--NIGHT 221A

WIDEN from the monitor screen with the cursor.

SECURITY OFFICER
Stalkers, we've got a bead... 20 degrees north mark seven, 12 degrees east mark two.

^21B INT. ZONE--NIGHT 221

DYNAMO
(hearing this)
Roger.
(to BuzzSaw)
Let's flank them.

BUZZSAW
(shifting gears)
You got it.
(pausing)
Fifty bucks says I get the big cop.

222 INT. ABANDONED BUILDING--NIGHT 222

Richards moves silently through the ruins, eyes panning the area. He REACTS to another sound: Someone is on the other side of a fallen wall. He moves there...LEAPS... we HEAR a SCREAM--

223 LAUGHLIN--ELSEWHERE IN BUILDING 223

He JUMPS at the sound, and then, pinpointing it, he runs in that direction... Weiss comes in from the side, runs beside his friend...

RICHARDS 224

As he charges his victim, lifting the body over his shoulder, slamming it to the ground! He steps in to deliver a blow when he HEARS--

AMBER
Richar--ah, Ben! It's me! Amber!

RICHARDS
Oh, Christ...

Aggrevated beyond belief, he groans, moves away. Weiss and Laughlin run in, attracted by the commotion.

AMBER
(sitting up)
You don't have to beat the crap out of me... you think I'm glad to be here?

LAUGHLIN
Who the hell is this?

CONTINUED

224 CONTINUED - 224

RICHARDS
She's the one who turned me in at the airport. I guess this is her reward.

AMBER
Go ahead, make jokes! It's your fault I'm in here! The police think I helped you--they think I'm your girlfriend--

RICHARDS
We can straighten that out. We'll find a camera and I'll strangle you for the home audience!

Weiss has ignored this lover's spat, points through a shattered window into the distance.

WEISS
Another relay...

AMBER
(to Richards)
What's he talking about?

Richards looks at her, condescends to reply.

RICHARDS
We're in a life a death situation, and these two are talking about "humanity" and "society"--!

LAUGHLIN
Damn straight.

RICHARDS
(exasperated)
There used to be a word for people like you.

WEISS
Yeah?

RICHARDS
Democrats.(or, "Liberals!")

Suddenly a SOUND outside makes them all jump.

AMBER
(worried)
Stalkers?

Richards nods... turns without a word, heading out. So does Laughlin. Amber doesn't need an invitation... follows.

225 INT. STUDIO--NIGHT 225

The audience watches Dynamo and BuzzSaw cruising through the Game Zone.

A SNACK VENDOR works his way down the aisle, tossing food to his customers.

226 EXT. GAME ZONE--NIGHT 226

The four runners move along cautiously, Richards in the lead. (X)

Suddenly a CHATTERING ROAR spins their heads around. BUZZSAW looms up, CLOSE to CAMERA, swings one of his blades--

227 WIDER 227

He slices through a streetlamp, which CRASHES down, just missing the group! They turn to run, stopping short as they see--

228 DYNAMO 228

Thunders up in his vehicle, cutting them off-- (X)

STUDIO AUDIENCE 229

They CHEER, anticipating some major action.

230 LEON--QUICK CUT 230

Killian and the cute model pile gifts and prizes into Leon's hands--

231 EXT. BARRIO 231

Heated betting and SHOUTS.

232 INT. GAME ZONE--NIGHT 232

RICHARDS
(whirling, a command)
Split up!

They scatter in four directions. Dynamo starts to run after Amber.

233 BUZZSAW 233

Leaner and meaner than his partner, he leaps into his bike saddle, shouts a rebel yell--does a wheelie-- pursues!

234 RICHARDS AND LAUGHLIN 234

They run like hell a few yards apart. But BuzzSaw's riding them down now, closing, closing... he SWINGS-- Laughlin sees it coming, shoves Richards out of the way-- he raises the hockey stick, but it's too little, too late--

235 BUZZSAW 235

-ROARS RIGHT OVER LAUGHLIN, SLASHES OUT WITH ONE ARM--

236 LAUGHLIN 236

--he's slashed brutally from shoulder to waist, flung aside by the impact.

237 DYNAMO'S "DYNAMOBILE" 237

Its headlights BOUNCE towards the CAMERA, finally comes to rest on a steep angle, halfway up a mountain of debris.

Dynamo jumps out of the vehicle. Free of his weight, it visibly RISES on its shocks. Close to CAMERA, Dynamo looks around suspiciously.

238 WEISS 238

Panting, he comes up over some fallen masonry, reacts as he sees--

239 NETWORK UPLINK--HIS POV 239

A tall narrow wreck of a building has been cannibalized into a tower. Relay dishes around the sides catch signals from all over the zone, and a giant MAIN DISH points skyward. (X)

240 BACK TO SCENE 240

Weiss looks back at--

241 DYNAMO--HIS POV 241

He's rummaging through a maze of rubble, looking in the wrong direction.

242 BACK TO SCENE 242

Weiss goes for it, running towards the uplink.

243 RICHARDS 243

Runs towards Laughlin. In the B.G. BuzzSaw is turning around for another charge. Seeing Richards, Laughlin adjusts his arms to hide the extent of his injury. (X) (X)

LAUGHLIN
(fighting the pain)
I'm... all right. Just... get that redneck mother fucker..!

Richards slaps his friend's shoulder, stands. He snatches up the fallen hockey stick. (X)

244 BUZZSAW 244

Rides in close... closer... SWINGS a sawblade... Richards SLAMS down on it with the stick--there's an impact--

245 RICHARDS 245

Momentarily pleased to have thwarted the charge, he suddenly realizes his stick is cut in half.

246 BUZZSAW 246

Swings around, FLINGS SOMETHING--

247 RICHARDS 247

A bolo wraps around his body! He's yanked off his feet!

248 WIDER 248

BuzzSaw drags Richards across an expanse of rubble and garbage.

249 RICHARDS 249

He's taking a terrible beating. He SMACKS into old bottles, bricks, boards, getting battered and bloodied.

250 AMBER 250

Runs under a metal stairway, turns and SLAMS into--Weiss! Both stifle their reaction, run off together.

251 DYNAMO 251

Far below them at the bottom of a hill, he's seen them. He starts to climb up.

252 BUZZSAW 252

On his cycle, he makes a curving turn to come back on his prey. The bolo cable slackens a bit...

253 RICHARDS 253

Battered terribly, he jerks to a halt, then starts to move again, slower than before. He looks ahead and sees--

254 SOME TWISTED STEEL REBAR--HIS POV 254

He's being dragged towards them--

BACK TO SCENE 255

Now they're coming up close... he reaches down, grabs the bolo weight on its length of loose cable... FLINGS it out to its four foot length--

256 REBAR--CLOSE 256

The bolo weight CATCHES--

257 BUZZSAW 257

The bike is yanked out from under him! BuzzSaw FLIPS through the air!

258 AUDIENCE--QUICK CUTS 258

They go nuts--

259 BUZZSAW 259

Groggy, costume torn, he staggers to his feet... his eyes open in shock as he sees--

260 **RICHARDS** 260

Running forward, whirling the bolo over his head!

261 **BUZZSAW** 261

Reacts too late. The bolo weight SLAMS him in the head, knocking him down.

262 **THE SCENE** 262

Richards grins, tries it again. Bad move. This time BuzzSaw is ready. He CUTS the cable with his blade, runs forward.

263 **RICHARDS** 263

Looks around, sees--

264 **BUILDING SKELETON--HIS P.O.V.** 264

Several stories of old girders rises above him.

265 **BACK TO SCENE** 265

Richards flings the remaining cable in BuzzSaw's face, runs for the girders... climbs! BuzzSaw recovers, follows!

266 **WEISS** 266

Runs side by side with Amber, then cuts to the side, approaches the relay building. He finds a rock, BREAKS open a junction box. Inside numerous circuit boards BLINK and HUM.

AMBER
What are you doing? Come on!

WEISS
This is more important!

She looks back, sees--

267 **DYNAMO** 267

Heading this way, slowly and surely. His 4 X 4 is visible below him on the slope.

268 GIRDERS 268

BuzzSaw pursues Richards up another level, and then out on a horizontal beam.

He SLASHES out with his weapons. Richards dodges from side to side behind a vertical beam. SPARKS sail up as the blade hits the steel. Chunks are HACKED OFF.

268A DYNAMO 268A

Thoroughly winded Dynamo has reached the top of the hill. He sucks (X in air, CHARGES his gauntlets. (X)

269 AMBER AND WEISS 269

AMBER
He's coming--!

WEISS
(pointing with his chin)
Get up there. Move!

She sees he's indicated an upper level of relative safety. She doesn't need to be told twice.

THE GIRDER HI-RISE 270

Richards grabs a chunk of steel, flings it at BuzzSaw. It staggers him... he regains his balance, continues to attack. Richards LEAPS to another girder.

Incredibly, so does BuzzSaw.

271 RICHARDS 271

Dodges another charge, LEAPS for some old stairs-- makes it! Now he has a chance at escape! But BuzzSaw SLASHES OUT--

272 STAIR SECTION--CLOSE SHOT 272

--as they're cut clean through--

273 BACK TO SCENE 273

They drop! Richards falls out of sight!

274 AUDIENCE 274

They APPLAUD, WHISTLE!

275 BUZZSAW 275

Stands on the end of the girder, does a victory dance.

BUZZSAW
First Death! First Death!

CAMERA DROPS DOWN and we see Richards! He's hanging beneath the girder, and now he moves hand over hand below and behind BuzzSaw, starts to pull himself up!

276 LOCKER ROOM 276

The people here stop cheering, react in alarm.

FIREBALL
Buzz! Look out! Shit, man, wake up--

277 BUZZSAW 277

Still grinning and shouting, he starts to turn around.

BUZZSAW
I claim First Death--!

He stops, flabbergasted to see Richards.

RICHARDS
You want it, you got it.

BuzzSaw activates his blade, too late. Richards KICKS the surprised Stalker right in the gut.

278 BUZZSAW--LONG SHOT 278

SCREAMING, blade CHATTERING, he falls three stories to his death.

279 BUZZSAW--ON GROUND 279

He lands on his own blade which RAMS THROUGH, appearing out his back.

280 LAUGHLIN 280

On the ground nearby, he sees this, smiles through his agony...

281 INT. LOCKER ROOM--NIGHT

Ad-lib REACTIONS as BuzzSaw's demise sinks in.

A HANDLER sobs quietly in a corner. The TOWELBOY punches a locker. A MANAGER sighs, reaches for a telephone.

MANAGER
(into phone)
Hello? Get me the Farm Team...

CUT TO:

282 RICHARDS

Has a moment of triumph, then he HEARS a SCREAM.

282A LAUGHLIN

Also hears it--

283 AMBER--CLOSE

AMBER
Look out--!

284 NEW ANGLE

Dynamo has appeared in a literal FLASH of electricity, BURSTING out of a small outbuilding.

Weiss doesn't look up.

WEISS
What's your name? Amber?

AMBER
(thrown)
Huh? Yes--

WEISS
Amber, I want you to remember these numbers and tell them to the others.
18. 24. 61-B. Say them.

Dynamo is RUNNING FORWARD.

AMBER
18. 24. 61-B. Oh, God--

CONTINUED

284 CONTINUED - 28.

WEISS
17. 17. 4!

He slams the box shut. He must know Dynamo is six feet away. But he looks up at Amber.

WEISS
You know, you have a very nice voice.

Dynamo LUNGES OUT with his gauntlets. Weiss is TRANSFIXED. Surrounded by an electrical aura, he TWITCHES SPASMODICALLY, drops... dead!

285 INT. LOCKER ROOM 28

Cheers here. Beer is poured on the towel boy's head.

DYNAMO'S MOM
(proudly)
That's my boy.

286 EXT. GAME ZONE 28

Dynamo steps over Weiss's body, runs around the side of the building to the stairs... just in time to block Amber's descent!

She freezes, trapped. He takes a step towards her... she swings under the handrail, strikes out, clipping him ferociously in the balls!

Dynamo GRUNTS in pain--then, even more enraged, he lunges forward, catches her wrist, yanks her down to the ground. He CHARGES a guantlet, leans in--and then the SOUND of a motor makes him look up--

287 NEW ANGLE 28

Richards ROARS towards the camera, mounted on BuzzSaw's bike, the metal hockey stick held under one arm like a lance! He SOARS over the CAMERA--

288 DYNAMO 28

The lance carries the full weight of bike and rider into his body. He FLIES BACKWARDS like a base hit.

288A RICHARDS

The impact spills him off the bike, which flips, gets TOTALED against a building--

289 DYNAMO--NEW ANGLE

He tumbles over the hill he labored to climb--

290 HIS 4 X 4

He rolls down like humpty dumpty, SMACKS into the already unbalanced vehicle. With a GROAN of metal and falling rubble, the vehicle falls on its side like a poleaxed horse!

291 INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

The audience can't believe it: Two giants of the sports world, one dead, one crippled.

292 AMBER

Runs to the crest of the hill, watches as--

DYNAMO

Tries to get up, but his waldo'd suit betrays him; one sparking leg buckles and he falls. Suddenly he reacts as

294 RICHARDS

Bloodied from his spill, he's nonetheless scrambled down the slope.

295 BACK TO SCENE

Panicked, struggling to right himself like an overturned tortoise, Dynamo squirms as Richards approaches, breaks off a long and ugly sharp stake from the splintered beam, which he drops with a CRASH. Richards comes closer, lays the stake at Dynamo's throat.

DYNAMO
Jesus Christ, somebody help-- Cut!
Cut! Go to commercial!

CONTINUED

295 CONTINUED - 2.

RICHARDS
They won't do that. They want blood. They want hate. Anything to keep the audience from thinking.

He tightens his hands on the stake... and then looks off at--

296 A CAMERA--RICHARD'S POV 2

On a tower, turning its red eye his way--

297 ROUND ROBIN--VARIOUS LOCATIONS 29

It's hushed everywhere as they wait for the kill--

298 BACK TO SCENE 298

Richard's fury PEAKS--

RICHARDS
No. I won't kill a helpless human being...

He throws the stake into the foreground.

RICHARDS(cont'd)
Even when he's a sadistic scumbag like you.

He turns--walks away! (X

299 DYNAMO 299

The fear leaves him... and so does his bladder control. We HEAR him tinkle... and then his groin SPARKS and SIZZLES.

300 ROUND ROBIN 300

A BUZZ goes through each crowd. They've never seen anything like this before.

301 INT. STUDIO--NIGHT 301

Killian turns, sees his audience is...

...thinking.

CONTINUED

KILLIAN
(quickly)
What an incredible battle! BuzzSaw gone... Dynamo down... but the Stalk isn't over until the fat lady sings... and until the last criminal pays his debt. We'll be back after this message and our halftime show!

302 OMITTED 302
(Note: This commercial will reappear in another place TBA.)

303 INT. LOCKER ROOM--NIGHT 303

Chaos reigns here now. BuzzSaw's people are in their cups. Two agents fight for the phone. A medic is treating Dynamo's mother for shock. Killian's last words (above) are HEARD on the monitor here.

CUT TO:

304 EXT. MOLD YARD--NIGHT 304

Teeth gritted, Laughlin lies where we left him. He looks up as Richards and Amber approach.

RICHARDS
Laughlin. Break's over. Let's get going--

And, saying this, he starts to help Laughlin up. But Laughlin groans in agony... his hands shift on his belly... and Richards and Amber see the wound.

LAUGHLIN
(through the pain)
Yeah, I'm going all right... but not with you.
(the pain passing)
BuzzSaw made my... travel arrangements.
(to Amber)
Weiss--?

CONTINUED

304 CONTINUED - 304

AMBER
(shaking her head)
He died... giving me that code.

Laughlin finds a reserve of strength, pulls Richards closer.

LAUGHLIN
Listen, Fritz. You gotta find Mic... The Underground's got a broadcast center... it's in the old subway system...somewhere in Quad 4.
(indicating Amber)
Take her there... her and the code.
(wincing)
Fritz...don't let us die for nothing.

Richards sighs, thinks.

RICHARDS
(finally)
All right. I'll do it. But on one condition.

He looks at Laughlin, seemingly very serious.

RICHARDS
You stop with the Fritz shit.

Despite himself, Laughlin laughs, then pats Richards' shoulder.

LAUGHLIN
I'm counting... on you to... finish the job. Don't let me down... I'd hate to be the only asshole in heaven... Ben.

He falls back...dead. Richards closes Laughlin's eyes... stands beside Amber in a moment of quiet... then turns, moving off quickly.

AMBER
Where are you going?

RICHARDS
To keep a promise.

KILLIAN'S VOICE
Hello. Am I on? Testing, one, two three. Yo, you in the Game Zone.

Richards and Amber freeze in mid-step, startled. They turn and see--

305 ZONE MONITOR--ABOVE THEM 305

It's flickered into life, revealing its existence for the first time. Killian is visible on it, in a tight close up, sitting in an easy chair like Roosevelt in a fireside chat.

KILLIAN
(on monitor)
I gotta hand it to you, Ben. You got the whole Network in an uproar. They're shipping bicarb to the Justice Department in crates. So this little call is not going over the air... it's just between us.

Richards and Amber slowly move towards the screen. Richards looks around, cautious.

KILLIAN
How would you like a three year contract, guaranteed, a Cadre credit line and a beach front condo? Sound impossible? Well, that's the standard deal for a Network Stalker. That's right, Ben. I know real talent when I see it, and I'd hate to see you canceled tonight when you could go the distance. Say the word and you'll be the one doing the Stalking.
Well, What do you think? (V.

306 RICHARDS 30

His face darkens, and then he LEAPS catlike, climbs wall and tower, comes face to face with the camera set up!

RICHARDS
What do I think, you cold blooded bastard? I'll tell you. I'll live to see you eat that contract. But you'd better leave some room for my fist, because I'm gonna reach in your gut and break your Goddamned spine--!

KILLIAN
I hope it's all not just physical, Ben. (X) (X)

He pulls his hand back, SMASHES the video link.

307 INT. KILLIAN'S OFFICE--NIGHT 3

Tony and a skeleton crew are here, filming Killian in an easy chair. As the picture on their monitor SMASHES, burns out, Killian involuntarily winces. He sucks in his breath, composes himself. Meanwhile, somewhere a phone RINGS.

KILLIAN
(forcing a smile)
Guy shoulda been an agent.

Brenda leans into the SHOT, holding a phone extension.

BRENDA
It's for you, Damon.
(enjoying it)
It's the Attorney General.

KILLIAN
I'll... take it in a second.
Everybody out...

They obey. He sucks in his breath, reaches for the phone...

308 EXT. BARRIO--NIGHT 308

Heated arguing and rapid betting again. CAMERA FOCUSES on one earnest BETTOR who pushes his way to the front, waves his money, shouts.

BETTOR
Fifty bucks! Fifty bucks for next blood on Ben Richards!

The crowd roars. The angry BOOKIE flings the money back in the bettor's face.

306 RICHARDS 306

His face darkens, and then he LEAPS catlike, climbs wall and tower, comes face to face with the camera set up!

RICHARDS
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Fifty bucks! Fifty bucks for next blood on Ben Richards!

The crowd roars. The angry BOOKIE flings the money back in the bettor's face.

CONTINUED

308 CONTINUED - 308

BOOKIE
Get the hell out of here! You can't bet on a Runner!

The crowd angrily SHOUTS their objection to this rule.

CUT TO:

309 INT. STUDIO--CLOSE ON FIREBALL 309

His clean facial lines now in a hellish mask, he's garbed in a red asbestos suit with flame accents.

Now, with an amplified DEMONIC LAUGH, Fireball turns, aims special nozzles on his forearms... STREAMS OF NAPALM SHOOT OUT, instantly meltdown two conveniently (and theatrically) placed BLOCKS OF ICE.

DON PARDO TYPE VOICE
If anyone deserves a warm welcome it's FIREBALL! Fireball's twin Napalm jets have a range of 20 meters and generate temperatures of 500 degrees farinheit. But through it all, he stays cool and calm, courtesy of his compact Kelton & Sons mini heat pump. Remember, if it's cool, it's a Kelton..!

FIREBALL
(into CAMERA)
I'm gonna kill that mother Richards! I'm gonna kill that traitorous bitch! I'm gonna rip out their un-American eyes and I'm gonna piss on their brains!

AUDIENCE
(chanting)
FireBall...FireBall...FireBall--

310 INT. GAME ZONE--MOLD YARD--NIGHT 310

There's a second grave here now. Richards and Amber look down at it. Involuntarily, she takes his hand.

AMBER
(with sad affection)
Me and my big mouth. We should have taken that trip to Hawaii.

CONTINUED

310 CONTINUED -

RICHARDS
(in the same tone)
I had the shirt for it. You fucked it up.

He manages a smile for her... It's not much of a moment; but it's a start. He GUNS the cycle and they move off--

311 EXT. NETWORK--LOADING AREA

Fireball steps out here. The fans CHEER. Handlers fiddle with his backpack. With a wave, Fireball BLASTS OFF the ground, courtesy of a Buck Rogers flying belt. His fans CHEER--

312 INT. STUDIO--TIGHT ON KILLIAN

As he embraces Mrs. McArdle, his number one fan.

KILLIAN
Okay, Agnes. We've still got two crack Stalkers out there... Dynamo and Fireball. Who do you think is going to make the next kill?

Killian tries to look interested as she goes into the usual contestants hemming and hawing.

MRS. MCARDLE
Oooh, boy, that's a tough one... After all that's happened, I just don't know....
(finally)
Okay. I think the next kill will be made by Ben Richards.

A moment's stunned silence.

KILLIAN
Uh, Mrs. McArdle... Richards is the Runner. You have to pick a Stalker--

MRS. MCARDLE
Don't tell me the rules, Damon. I've been watching this show since the premiere. I can pick anyone I want. And I pick Ben Richards. That boy's one mean motherfucker!

313 THE AUDIENCE

They laugh at her... and then, with her! The CHANT we've learned to expect begins, slower than before, but it builds just the same...

THE CROWD
Richards... Richards... Richards...
RICHARDS... RICHARDS...

314 KILLIAN

His smile fades as the sound washes over him. He signals a STAGEHAND subtly and the big screen switches to a PROMO, which we HEAR but don't see, as we PAN Killian off stage. The crowd's CHANT threatens to drown out the promo SONG of--

PROMO SONG(O.S.)
Cadre Cola
It hits the spot!
Cadre Cola
It's really hot--

315 EXT. BARRIO--NIGHT

The moment Edith has said her piece about Richards, the crowd here ROARS their approval.

The bettor we met earlier JUMPS UP close to the CAMERA.

BETTOR
(shouting)
Two hundred dollars on Ben Richards!

A giant cheer. Others JOIN IN, rush the betting area.

316 POLICE

Raise nightsticks, try and hold back the crowd.

317 WIDER

A chant begins: 'TAKE THE BET' alternates with 'WE WANT RICHARDS'.

318 NONCOM ON WALL

He looks at his outnumbered officers, gives the Bookies at the betting area a big look.

319 CHIEF BOOKIE

He's frightened enough to be flexible. He takes out a grease pencil, scrawls something on a magnetic card... smacks it on the board.

It says: RICHARDS--100 TO 1.

320 WIDE SHOT

The mob here CHEERS, waving upraised fists.

321 EXT. GAME ZONE--NIGHT

WIDEN from a wall with a "Quad 4" on it. Amber watches while Richards heaves some rubble away from a depression in the ground. Nothing's there.

RICHARDS
Secret broadcast center, my ass! Laughlin, you...
(skyward)
Democrat!

He flings debris in all directions, frustrated.

AMBER

As he returns, Amber sees blood flowing on his shoulder where his efforts have opened an earlier wound. She looks at it, rips a piece of her costume to bind it.

RICHARDS
t's nothing--the damned network doctor did it--
(about the bandage)
I don't need that--

AMBER
(as she works)
I do. Without you, I'm screwed.

He laughs, lets her continue.

AMBER
You know, Richards, you talk real tough. But deep down, you're a kind, sensitive person. I can tell.

RICHARDS
(deadpan)
You're absolutely right.

CONTINUED

322 CONTINUED -

Suddenly a SOUND attracts their attention. They look up, see--

323 FIREBALL--THEIR POV

Flying through the air, a twisted Superman on patrol!

324 BACK TO SCENE

AMBER
Jesus Christ--

RICHARDS
Guess again.

He grabs her hand, and they run off!

325 thru 326 OMITTED

326 FIREBALL

He LANDS in a cloud of steam, cocks his head, listening to--

911 VOICE
Fireball. Target is 15 degrees north.

He runs like like a machine...

327 THE STUDIO AUDIENCE

They respond to this new thrill--

KILLIAN
There he goes... the Number One Rusher, he smells blood and nothing on earth's gonna stop him!

Something offstage attracts Killian's attention. He looks off, sees--

328 BRENDA--OFFSTAGE--HIS POV

She's standing with a uniformed MILITIA CAPTAIN. She points to him, puzzled, but clearly the officer wants to talk to Killian.

329 BACK TO SCENE

Killian nods, signals the Don Pardo clone to take over.

330 RICHARDS AND AMBER

They run towards CAMERA, where Richards stops, looking off at--

331 SUBWAY ENTRANCE--HIS POINT OF VIEW

A fallen sign identifies it. A ramp leads downwards.

332 BACK TO SCENE

AMBER
The subway--!

They rush downwards!

333 FIREBALL

A moment later, he runs into the SHOT--listens to his headphone... follows!

334 INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

The crowd reacts, sensing serious action--

INT. ABANDONED TERMINAL--NIGHT

Richards and Amber pause in some shadows... then HEAR FireBall's footfalls above them.

RICHARDS
Shit! How did he find us?

They find a barred and locked fence. Richards kicks it in and they rush into the darkness beyond.

336 FIREBALL

Comes rapidly along on their trail.

337 INT. TUNNELS---NIGHT

They run along. Suddenly Richards stops, almost knocking Amber off balance. He's seen--

338 SOME OIL DRUMS AND FLARES

Piled in a corner, a patina of dust on them.

339 BACK TO SCENE

Richards and the girl grab the flares. Desperate, Richards SMASHES the cap on a can. Some oil trickles out. Amber glances over her shoulder, yelps--

340 FIREBALL--HER POV

He's stepped into view, sets the range finder on his launchers.

341 BACK TO SCENE

Amber starts to flee, slips on the little pool of oil. Richards catches her--

342 FIREBALL

Shoots his FLAME--

RICHARDS

Yanks Amber to safety. They hug the wall as the FIREBALL thunders past. Then Richards steps out, picks the oil barrel over his head, FLINGS it backwards!

344 THE OIL BARREL

Rolls towards FireBall, liquid sloshing out the open cap in a ragged line!

345 BACK TO SCENE

Richards lights a flare, throws it--it lands on the line of fuel, and a FLAME SHOOTS ALONG IT towards the barrel--

346 A THUNDEROUS EXPLOSION

rocks the corridor.

347 RICHARDS AND AMBER

Wince, wait for it subside. The stand up, look off, hopeful--

348 WALL OF FLAMES--THEIR P.O.V.

Pause. And then FireBall steps through them, cool & calm, thanks to his Kelton & Sons heat pump!

349 BACK TO SCENE

AMBER
How can he follow us down here? We can't even see!

Richards stops in mid-step, feels his shoulder. He grabs her hand, runs like hell.

350 ROUND ROBIN--VARIOUS LOCATIONS

351 INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL--NIGHT

FireBall unleashes another BURST--

352 RICHARDS AND AMBER

Dive into a side tunnel. Richards SLAMS into a big valve. Hew looks up and sees--

353 SIGN OVER VALVE

Reading "DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND POWER--GAS MAIN #211."

354 BACK TO SCENE

Richards snaps the dogtag from his neck, breaks it in half. Then he takes the jagged edge, digs into his arm with it.

AMBER
What are you doing--

RICHARDS
They've been right on our ass since we started... no matter where we hid, they found us... there's only one explanation... they planted a homer...

Blood runs down his arm...

366A CLOSER

Now he's pried some...thing out of his flesh. It looks like a tiny scarab, legs and all, and it BLINKS like an LED. It's a little electronic device, sensors and antenna making it a literal "bug" which TWITCHES with electronic life.

366B WIDER

AMBER
(sotto)
And I thought crabs were bad...

Richards puts the blinking homer on top of the big pipe, then he grabs the valve. It's rusted shut. He STRAINS, loosens it. It begins to CREAK open... we HEAR a hiss.

RICHARDS
(to her)
Run.

She obeys.

355 FIREBALL

Comes around a bend some distance back. He looks around--listens in his headphone--

911 VOICE
Dead ahead. Thirty yards. You got 'em.

Fireball grins, aims--

356 thru 357 OMITTED

357A THE HOMER

Blinks as gas HISSES OUT beneath it--

358 RICHARDS--LOW ANGLE

He DIVES over the CAMERA, rolls away... we TIGHTEN ON the hissing GAS MAIN--Fireball's FLAME arrives here--

359 AMBER

Richards SLAMS into her, taking them both to the deck, just as

360 A THUNDEROUS DOUBLE EXPLOSION

FILLS THE SCREEN, BLOWING FIREBALL LITERALLY TO BITS!

361 RICHARDS AND AMBER

Crouched around the bend, recoiling from the flames. As they DIE DOWN, FireBall's HELMET and other recognizable CHUNKS bounce past the CAMERA.

RICHARDS
(after a moment)
What a hot head...

362 INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

Phil the announcer winces along with the audience, as the onscreen FLASH of Fireball's final immolation briefly illuminates the room like a flashbulb.

363 EXT. BARRIO--NIGHT

CROWD
(chanting)
Richards...Richards...Richards..!

The board Bookie is writing something... he slaps a card on the board.

It reads "RICHARDS--20 to 1."

The mob CHEERS WILDLY--

363A INT. 911 ROOM

The tracker screen GOES DEAD.

SECURITY OFFICER
Shit. We just lost the homer.

364 INT. CONTROL ROOM--NIGHT

The last of the flames are on the monitors here. Killian blanches, but recovers. Behind him, we see Tony, Brenda, Cap, and the Militia Officer. Between them, Sven, and the regular crew, it's pretty chaotic.

CAP
Forget it, Killian! I won't do it--

CONTINUED

364 CONTINUED - 364

KILLIAN
It's not a request, moron--
It's an order--

CAP
I won't be part of any trickery.
This sport is about death and honor...
the code of the Gladiators--

KILLIAN
Christ, I've had all I can take of
your combat zen shit! This isn't
a game-- it's bread and circuses,
and they're up there betting on
Richards!

CAP
Bullshit--I quit--

KILLIAN
Fine, go clean out your locker or
open a car dealership or something.
But you didn't quit, "Captain" --your
ass is fired!
(to Sven)
Get him out of here...What the fucks (X)
wrong with you? (pause) Are your (X)
steroids making you deaf? (X)
Throw him out!

Sven finally responds, hustling the Cap out with a minimum of force.

BRENDA
There's still Dynamo. He's with
his mother downstairs--

KILLIAN
Get him into the bluescreen room
stat.
(to the Militia officer)
Have your troops waiting by the Game
Zone wall and wait for my signal.

TONY
Damon, what do we put on the air
in the meantime?
(indicating monitors)
Phil's out there doing a Goddamn
sing along--

CONTINUED

364 CONTINUED - (2) 364

KILLIAN
Run anything! Get the dancers out there, have them do, I don't know, a funeral number! Generic eulogy, some Martha Graham bullshit--

He waves his hands with mock grace in illustration.

KILLIAN
I don't give a flying fuck! Stall. Stretch. Now get out!

(X)

CUT TO:

365 INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNELS--NIGHT 365

Holding an improvised torch aloft, Richards leads the way through the tunnels.

AMBER
Look, I'm kind of claustrophobic, so can we move it, okay?

And she rushes ahead, only to collide with--

366 A ROTTING SKELETON--NEW ANGLE 366

Amber SCREAMS, backs away into another SKELETON--SCREAMS AGAIN and backs into Richards, who clasps his hand over her mouth, stifling the scream he inspired. He grabs the torch from her, holds it high. As Amber calms, they both see the scraps of familiar uniforms on the bodies.

AMBER
(quietly)
Running Men. Last Season's losers--

RICHARDS
(hard)
No. Last season's winners.

As she reacts, he reaches out, SNAPS the I.D. disks from the corpses.

CONTINUED

366 CONTINUED -

RICHARDS
(reading the names)
Whitman. Price. Haddad!
(gesturing, furious)
Basking in the Maui sun, my ass! Killian can't even play by his own crooked rules! Somehow they tracked them all down and murdered them like pigs--

Richards flings the ID tags into the darkness. Then he and Amber REACT to SOUNDS all about them: The GROANS and CREAKS of sliding metal; the PATTER of feet.

AMBER
(a small voice)
Now what?

Richards tenses, ready for anything--except for what happens.

366A thru 366D OMITTED

367 NEW ANGLE

--as the floor HEAVES up as a hidden cargo net is yanked upwards. Dust and debris cloud the air as it jerks taught. The torch goes flying. Richards and Amber are knocked off balance.

So are two of the corpses, which tumble into the net with their living colleagues. Amber SCREAMS. Richards struggles to tear the net with his bare hands, but there's no way to get leverage. Suddenly he reacts as LIGHTS snap on in the corridor.

368 WIDER

Several heavily armed TEENAGERS have appeared near a hidden door. In the flickering light of the ancient overheads, we recognize the leader: It's Mic's son Stevie.

STEVIE
Hey. Big Ben. How's tricks?

CUT TO:

369 INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

The audience watches respectfully as the Stalkettes do, well, some of that Martha Graham bullshit. The girls are in brief (but black) versions of their normal attire, and there's lots of mournful waving and wailing... maybe even some candles.

INT. CONTROL ROOM--NIGHT

One monitor shows the blue screen room. Another shows the dance number now on the air.

TONY
(to no one in particular)
This is what I hate--third act problems. Roll stock.

A tape machine plays.

TONY
Isolate blue screen.

A switch is thrown. The screen depicting Dynamo in the blue set flickers. Suddenly nothing is there... except Dynamo.

TONY
Activa--

KILLIAN
(cutting him off)
Activate traveling matte.

The background of the Game Zone appears behind Dynamo.

MONITOR WITH STOCK FOOTAGE

We see Richards and Amber running in a PAN SHOT. Suddenly Dynamo APPEARS behind them running heroically.

372 INT. BLUE SCREEN SET--MATCHING ACTION

WIDEN from Dynamo. He's running along heroically... on a treadmill!

373 INT. SUBWAY STATION--NIGHT

A door opens. An armed partisan admits Stevie and his group. They have Richards and Amber with them.

374 NEW ANGLE

Richards and Amber take in their new surroundings. Old turnstiles and subway signs have been usurped by banks of computer and video gear. The center of the room is swept clear, and the jury-rigged monitors and cables create a core of new activity. One of the monitors shows the ongoing Running Man broadcast.

CONTINUED

374 CONTINUED -

MIC
Mr. Richards. Miss Mendes. Welcome to the People's Network. We've been waiting for you.

RICHARDS
That's nice of you, Mic.

Hearing this name, Amber reacts--

RICHARDS(cont'd)
It might have been nicer if you got off your asses and helped us out there.

MIC
We couldn't. We'd be seen, and then the Government would find this place. Laughlin and Weiss and others you don't even know about would have died for nothing.

AMBER
They didn't. I've got the uplink code you want.

She grabs a pencil, writes it down. Mic takes it, pleased.

MIC
(to the room)
Stations, everyone. We're gonna steal us a satellite!

They all CHEER, move. Richards comes over to Mic.

RICHARDS
You've got what you want. Now give me what I want. If you can get in here without being seen, I can get out. Where's the door?

Suddenly everyone turns at the SOUND OF--

KILLIAN'S VOICE
(from SCREEN)
Ladies and Gentlemen, I've got an update on tonight's incredible action.

375 SCREEN--THEIR POV 375

The last of the dancers runs off stage as Killian points to the big monitor.

CONTINUED

375 CONTINUED - 3

KILLIAN(cont'd)
The Runners have just entered the final Quad--
(gasps from the audience)
--and Dynamo is hot on their trail!
Let's go live to the Game Zone!

376 BACK TO SCENE 3

Richards and Amber react, surprised--

377 MAIN MONITOR SCREEN--THEIR P.O.V. 3

The Running Man broadcast is continuing. We see Richards and Amber try and escape from Dynamo (in a lift from their earlier successful attempt to do just that.) But then a NEW SHOT of Dynamo is interposed... added to a FAKED SHOT of Dynamo catching up to Amber.

378 AMBER--ON SCREEN 3

She SCREAMS in a brief clip of her reaction to Weiss' death-- but now ELECTRICAL EFFECTS have been added to this close up... and then a SHOT of her STUMBLING (also seen earlier) completes her "death", with added electrical FX and a STILL FRAME completing the illusion.

379 AMBER--IN SUBWAY STATION 3

Reacts to her own "death"--

380 IN THE BARRIO 3

A MOAN rolls across the crowd like a wave--

381 RICHARDS--ON SCREEN 3

Regards his comrades' death for a moment... turns to run! Dynamo pursues him! Up ahead, we see Quad 4 and the finish line!

382 STUDIO AUDIENCE--SAME TIME 3

Watching the same footage, believing it--

383 INT. CONTROL ROOM

WIDEN from the "ON AIR" monitor.

Dynamo is sitting here, stuffing his face with danish--

384 RICHARDS AND AMBER

Beside Mic, they watch with strange fascination...

385 RICHARDS AND DYNAMO--"IN THE ZONE"

A powerful punch from Richards staggers Dynamo for a moment... then Dynamo comes back with a backhand that knocks Richards on his ass... Desperate, Richards tries to avoid those deadly devices...

386 RICHARDS--ON SCREEN--CLOSE

His luck runs out. He SCREAMS as Dynamo RAMS both gauntlets into his midsection.

An ELECTRIC GLOW envelops Richard's body... he TWITCHES, STIFFENS...

Falls backwards, dead!

387 IN THE BARRIO

CAMERA MOVES through the crowd. They're stock still, tears welling in unbelieving eyes. An OLDER WOMAN crosses herself...

388 GAME STUDIO--NIGHT

The audience APPLAUDS and CHEERS, but it's watery, insipid... too many of them had turned the corner and rooted for Richards.

389 INT. SUBWAY STATION

Richards sits down wearily.

AMBER
What's wrong? You should be happy... we're officially dead! We can go anywhere-- do anything--

RICHARDS
No. They'll never let us out of here alive. They can't afford it.
(MORE)

CONTINUED

389 CONTINUED -

RICHARDS (Cont'd)
They'll bring in the police, the army... hunt us down like dogs... off camera of course.

He turns, noticing--

390 STEVIE AND SOME GUERRILLAS

Checking and loading weapons.

391 BACK TO SCENE

RICHARDS
(puzzled, to Mic)
Guns? You don't need guns to jam a satellite--

MIC
I do to keep it. The minute I steal the signal, the Network will try to shunt to the next one in orbit. Stevie's group is going inside to stop them.

RICHARDS
Those children? Bad move, Mic. You need someone with experience... combat experience... and show biz experience.

MIC
I thought you were looking for the door.

CAMERA TIGHTENS on Richards.

RICHARDS
Nah. I told Killian "I'll be back".
(smiling)
I wouldn't want to be a liar.

As they react, pleased, we

CUT TO:

392 INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

Oblivious of the despair in the studio, Dynamo dances around his victim onscreen like a fullback after a touchdown.

CONTINUED

392 CONTINUED -

STAGE EFFECTS go off in celebration. MUSIC COMES UP. SUPERED END TITLES begin to roll over the big monitor screen.

393 INT. CONTROL ROOM--NIGHT

Killian gets up wearily, slaps his techs on the back for a good job.

KILLIAN
Nice Work, Tony.
Nice work, everyone.
(to Brenda)
I'll be in my dressing room until the post-game starts. I'll fill in for that idiot Captain Freedom.
(sotto)
Give the soldiers the green light.
(pausing at the door)
Oh... consider yourselves all picked up for the rest of the season.
(on their SILENCE)
What is this, an audience or a wake?

DON PARDO
TYPE VOICE
(over credits)
The Running Man has been brought to you by Breakaway Insulated outerwear, Ortho Pure Procreation Pills, and Cadre Cola--it hits the spot! Promotional considerations paid for by Kelton Air Coolers and Wainwright Energizers...
Damon Killian's wardrobe by Chez Antoine. If you're planning to be in the Los Angeles area, tickets for the ICS studio tour are available for Cadre Members in good standing. I'm Phil Hilton. Good Night and God Bless.

He goes out. Everyone looks at each other.

CUT TO:

394 INT. SUBWAY STATION--NIGHT

Richards--wounds dressed, heavily armed--moves down a line of juvenile troops, checking their gear. Mic examines some handwritten pages, makes changes.

MIC
We're going to send the uplink code in twenty minutes. I'll go on the air 10 seconds later.

RICHARDS
We'll be ready.

Amber appears, also dressed for combat. She takes the pages from Mic.

CONTINUED

394 CONTINUED - 3

AMBER
If you want to make an impression, forget the speech.

She hands him a microcassette.

AMBER
Try this instead.

MIC
What is it?

AMBER
It's the original video from the Bakersfield Massacre--before they "edited it for broadcast."

Richards looks up, startled.

RICHARDS
Where'd you hide that?

AMBER
Don't ask.

He smiles at her... then they all move out the door.

CUT TO:

395 INT. STUDIO--NIGHT 39

The audience APPLAUDS as DANCERS in cheerleader gear do an opening number. Most of the stage has been struck; now, a spotlight illuminates a "POST-GAME" show.

396 INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL--NIGHT 39

A dragnet of soldiers moves through here (possibly led by the officer we saw in the control room). Their FLASHLIGHTS sweep past the dead Runners of last season...

the soldiers move on, exit right...

Pause. Richards, Amber, Stevie, Tahina and other Resistance fighters enter from the left. Stevie guides them to some fallen corrugated steel. Richards helps him move it, revealing--

397 INT. TUNNEL--(CENTRAL PIPE GALLERY)--NIGHT

They move along quickly, Stevie pointing the way, Richards leading the group.

409 CONTINUED -

THEY'RE LYING TO YOU.
EVERY MINUTE, EVERY DAY.
TAKE BEN RICHARDS.
HE'S NOT A MURDERER.
HE'S A HERO.
STILL NOT SURE?
THEN WATCH THIS.

The video of the Bakersfield massacre is beginning to play.

The original video. We see the clip of the crowd and the 'copters, as before.

COMMAND VOICE
This is Dispatch, calling Eagle One.
Come in, Eagle One.

RICHARDS
This is Eagle One. I'm above the crowd.

COMMAND VOICE
Roger, Eagle One. Begin attack run.
Bomb and strafe the entire area.

Killian's mouth drops open. The audience is momentarily confused--and then they get interested as they recognize Richards.

RICHARDS
(in video)
Dispatch, didn't you hear me? They are unarmed. Repeat, unarmed.

410 INT. 911 ROOM--NIGHT

Seeing the screen, the propaganda officer picks her head up from the floor, astonished.

PROPAGANDA OFFICER
That's impossible... I put that back in the file myself--

Amber smiles through the doorway at the woman on the floor.

AMBER
Did you?

And, saying this, she slams a microcassette into a player. A digitized Academy Leader counts down from six. The recording begins.

It's Amber singing the song we saw her write earlier.

CONTINUED

410 CONTINUED -

AMBER'S VOICE
"When you're all alone
and there's no one home--"

AMBER
(to the guerillas)
I know the layout here. I'll cover
the corridor.

She goes out.

411 INT. LOCKER ROOM--NIGHT

Captain Freedom is alone here, slam-dunking his belongings into a duffel bag with bottled fury. Then STATIC from the monitor screen attracts his attention. He looks up and sees the Bakersfield footage.

COMMAND VOICE
(from video)
You have your orders, Eagle One.
Proceed.

RICHARDS
(from video)
Bullshit! I'll do it my way!

But--despite these images--there's no epiphany of understanding on Cap's face; just confusion... and denial... and puzzlement.

412 EXT. BARRIO--NIGHT

People are crowding up against the big public screen, watching the playback growing agitation. By now, Richards is struggling with his co-pilot.

COMMAND VOICE
(on screen)
Attention units two and four. Proceed
as ordered. Units three and five,
engage Eagle One and force it down.
We have a renegade--

At the gate, the guards grow increasingly insecure.

413 INT. CONTROL ROOM--NIGHT 413

Everyone's in a state of confusion.

TONY
Where's it coming from--

BRENDA
The Network satellite--!

Suddenly guerrillas break in, guns held ready.

STEVIE
(to Tony)
Uh-uh. Don't touch that dial.

414 INT. STUDIO--NIGHT 414

The audience watches, becoming agitated. A FISTFIGHT has broken out in one corner of the stands. Then Killian comes into view, waves for silence.

KILLIAN
Ladies and Gentlemen... if you'll just bear with us... we're experiencing, ah, technical difficulties...

MRS. MCARDLE
Bullshit!

Suddenly the rear doors SMASH OPEN! Richards is there, guns in both hands! Behind him, several Resistance fighters secure the corridor.

RICHARDS
(quietly mocking)
Hello, cutie-pie. It's <u>showtime</u>...

The crowd reacts in amazement. Then they're SCREAMING and running for the exits, because

415 THE SECURITY GUARDS 415

Have opened fire on Richards, who dives for cover.

416 BARRIO--NIGHT 416

The disconsolate people here are drifting away from the set... and then a few, and then a few more look up, and see RICHARDS as he enters the Studio!

CONTINUED

416 CONTINUED - 41

Hope renewed, the people here gleefully begin to CHANT Richard's NAME... alarmed, police officers move into the crowd to quiet them-- the police are overpowered, pushed aside!

417 INT. CONTROL ROOM--NIGHT 41

Stevie has sat down beside Tony and Brenda, works controls.

STEVIE
(eying the panel)
Wow, is that a Fairchild 21-11? I thought they were still on the drawing boards!

BRENDA
Well, we have a connection...

STEVIE
Hey, you wanna lock the studio doors?

TONY
(obeying)
With pleasure...

He hits a control--

418 INT. STUDIO--QUICK CUTS 41

The exit doors automatically BOLT behind the last of the fleeing audience.

419 STUDIO--WIDER 41

Richards PICKS OFF a security guard who fires from a high perch. The man plunges past Killian, SCREAMING. But two more guards move to flank Richards.

420 INT. NETWORK CORRIDOR--NEAR 911 ROOM 42

Two SECURITY GUARDS try and come around the corner here. Amber unleashes a BURST from her assault rifle. Their pistols outgunned, the guards dive for cover, crash through some stairwell doors. We HEAR them clatter down the steps.

421 AMBER 42

Feeling cocky now, she blows smoke from the gun barrel, turns to look the other way--GASPS as Dynamo LOOMS UP behind her, BACKHANDS her. Amber's weapon clatters away, out of reach. Dynamo grins savagely...

DYNAMO
Thought it was funny, out there in the Zone.
(another SLAP)
Making me look like a fool in front of all my fans.

Frightened, Amber backs away on the floor, hands groping behind her for the gun. Dynamo closes in on her...

422 INT. STUDIO--NIGHT 42

Richard yanks a chair from the floor, SLAMS it into a guard, knocking him over a railing.

423 AMBER--IN CORRIDOR 423

She slides across the linoleum, propelled by another whap from Dynamo. He stands over her, grinning.

DYNAMO
What's the matter, now, bitch? Why aren't you laughing?

Amber looks over at her rifle.

It's just out of reach behind Dynamo. She gambles--

AMBER
(firmly)
'Cause there's nothing funny about a dickless moron with a battery up his ass.

His eyes pop--

CUT TO:

424 INT. STUDIO--NIGHT 424

Richards turns to catch the charge of the last guard, who dives over a seat at the Runner. Richards picks the guard up bodily--throws him at--

425 THE RUNNING MAN DISPLAY 42

Which EXPLODES around the screaming man, setting off a chain reaction of short circuits around the room.

426 BACK TO SCENE 42

The smoke clears. Richard advances through it, descending down the aisle towards Killian. Killian hears Ben's voice.

RICHARDS
Hi cutie-pie. One of us is in deep trouble... (X)

KILLIAN
You want to talk to Richards? Sven? (X)

SVEN
Sorry. I have to score some steroids (X)

And he's gone. Killian stands on the stage, small and alone.

427 INT. CORRIDOR--NIGHT 427

Dynamo looms above the young woman, hands groping for his belt.

DYNAMO
Dickless, huh? I'll show you dickless--

His pants start to drop. Amber seizes the moment, diving under his legs and grabbing the gun. Alarmed, he spins round, catches the gun barrel with one hand. Smiling, he forces it away from his body and skywards.

428 AMBER 428

She looks over his shoulder, sees that the gun barrel is pointed at the metal asterisk on the ceiling. She FIRES--

429 THE CEILING SPRINKER 429

EXPLODES as the bullets hit it. Water SPURTS OUT--

430 BACK TO SCENE 430

As the water walls on him, his ENTIRE SUIT SHORT CIRCUITS. He SCREAMS, a human fireworks display! Then, frozen into a death rictus, he DROPS onto the floor, face first!

Amber catches her breath, stands in the downpour. She picks up her gun, then sees--

431 DYNAMO--ANOTHER ANGLE 431

Arms and legs stretched out stiffly, his body hasn't contacted the floor; something holds it up several inches.

432 BACK TO SCENE 432

AMBER
(shrugging)
Okay. He wasn't dickless...

433 INT. STUDIO--NIGHT 433

Richards slowly advances down the main aisle towards his enemy. But there's still a little trouper left in Killian, and he manages a smile as Richards closes in.

KILLIAN
Richards. You look pissed. Well, you've got a right to be. They didn't play by the rules. But it wasn't my idea, I swear it. The Goddamn politicians had to get involved... they made do it-- (X)

RICHARDS
Yeah? Did they make you cash your paychecks too? Did they make you lie to me and kill my friends?

Killian backs through the set, overturning chairs and equipment. But nothing slows Richards' advance.

KILLIAN
Your friends? I don't know your fuckin friends! (X)

RICHARDS
Get into the chair! (X)

KILLIAN (X)
I don't give a fuck about the chair. I'll get into the chair..
What the fuck do you think this is all about? For Christ's sake... People?-- (X)
Bullshit!--
It's about Ratings!! (X)
-- This is Television...
For 50 years we've told them what to eat, what to drink, what to wear... We've even told them the best place to be buried. (X)
You may find this hard to believe, Ben, but once upon a time we actually had <u>good</u> politicians -- then they campaigned on television and people voted for them (X)

(MORE)

CONTINUED

433 CONTINUED - 433

KILLIAN (cont'd) (X)
because they fucking looked good! (X)
Back in the 80's they even elected an
actor to the Presidency - for Christ (X)
Sake... People love T.V. They wean
their kids on it.. (X)
It's the Great American Tit!
You want to know what to read? (X)
Watch T.V.
What movies to see? (X)
Watch T.V.
They loved wrestling - game shows - sports - (X)
They loved violence. They loved seeing
crashes, assassinations, disasters of all (X)
kinds.
So we give them what they want and when (X)
they watch this shit they don't Riot,
They don't Protest. They don't even (X)
fucking think. They watch T.V.
And now they've seen you - you're their (X)
new hero...
I'm through...
That's Okay.
You! can host this show - you'll be rich - (X)
famous - have anything you want-
but kill me and you're just another
FUCKING STALKER. (X)

Ben pauses - considers - ponders - and even wavers.

434 OMITTED 434

434A EXT. NETWORK--MAIN ENTRANCE 434A

Vehicles SLAM into the shot, discharge SWAT troopers. They leap down, donning riot gear, loading weapons-- suddenly they STOP in surprise.

An angry CROWD is approaching, waving sticks, gardening tools... and hastily painted signs reading...

... Richards

435 INT. STUDIO--RICHARDS AND KILLIAN 435

KILLIAN
Come on, Cutie-Pie. Take a shot!

RICHARDS
I've got a better idea, cutie-pie.

And he turns, flings Killian into the rocket sled. The straps automatically CLAMP him down.

RICHARDS
Let's give you a shot!

Richards hits the control. Killian SCREAMS as he shoots into the rocket tube.

436 INT. ROCKET TUBE--(PROCESS) 43-

Killian HOWLS as the wind whips his head back against the seat. He moans in terror as the chair turns upside down.

437 RIVERBED--NIGHT 43

The rocketsled SHOOTS out of the tube... right past the now FOLDED UP net where a startled CUSTODIAN sweeps up. Killian SCREAMS as it bounces like a rock on a pond--

438 REVERSE ANGLE 43

The sled SLAMS into a billboard of Killian holding a Cadre Cola can--EXPLODES!

439 STUDIO 43

RICHARDS
(watching monitor)
Well. That hit the spot...

Suddenly a CRASH spins his head around. He looks at--

REAR OF STUDIO--HIS P.O.V. 439A

A heavily armed contingent of SECURITY GUARDS has rushed in. At their head is Captain Freedom, back in the red, white and blue uniform of his glorious Stalking days! Freedom himself has a rifle, which he aims along with all the others, right at Richards.

439B INT. CONTROL ROOM 439B

A sharp intake of breath from everyone as this appears on the "ON AIR" monitor. Tony reaches for a switch-- Stevie holds up a staying hand, reaches himself for another control--

439C IN THE STUDIO 439C

A lone SPOTLIGHT swivels, seeks out Richards.

CAPTAIN FREEDOM
(to the others)
Listen up! We do this right! We do it legal! We have no choice! WE have to end the lies! We have to end the deceit! On my command--!

A score of weapons PIVOT, point in the right direction--

439D RICHARDS 439D

Outnumbered, his own weapon out of reach, he tightens his jaw... starts up the aisle!

439E BACK TO SCENE 439E

CAP
Ready!

A score of weapons loudly COCK.

Richard keeps coming.

CAP
Aim!

Richard continues, unflinching--

CAP
Fi--

But Richards is There, not a distant dot in crosshairs, but a living, breathing, bleeding man, who puts one bruised hand on the rifle muzzle, gently but firmly pushing it down, armed only with the truth.

RICHARDS
(quietly)
You were right. We have to end the lies. We have to end the deceit.

The Cap looks at him--his eyes blink....and then they clear, and the Greatest Stalker drops the rifle to the floor!

439F WIDER--MOVING SHOT 439F

Richards slow continues through the packed group, heading for the door.

One by one, the men drop their guns, unable to deny what they know is right. Then Richards is out the door and in the corridor--

439G REVERSE ANGLE 439G

Amber is there, along with the others from the 911 room and the officers who have captured them. But now they're unmolested, and Amber isn't the only one fighting back tears.

He takes her hand. The officers part to let them pass.

439H EXT. NETWORK ENTRANCE--NIGHT 439H

The crowd has prevailed here. The outnumbered police have abandoned their weapons and are getting used to affection instead of fear from the citizenry. Banners with Richards' name on them are waved in the air.

Meanwhile, the Man himself is virtually ignored as he comes out of the building, Amber's hand still in his.

They descend the steps, look back at the celebration.

AMBER
I think they're throwing you a party.

RICHARDS
Nah. That's for Laughlin. For Weiss. For... everyone.

AMBER
(gently pullng him along)
Come on. We'll go back to my place.

RICHARDS
What? And quit show business?

But he grins and lets her take the lead--

440 OMITTED 440
thru
449 449

450 INT. SUBWAY STATION--DAY 450

Mic is surrounded by old tape cartridges, the result of his search through the trunk.

But now he's found the cartridge he wanted. He holds it gingerly, blows dusts off of it. Puts it into a playback deck...

451 EXT. BARRIO--NIGHT 451

On the public screen, we SEE the tape begin. It's faded, scratched, its colors muted... but it still moves the heart.

It's a 50 year old network SIGN ON. As as the STAR SPANGLED BANNER PLAYS over patriotic shots and a super'd AMERICAN FLAG, the people here rush the abandoned gate, stream into the promised land.

CONTINUED

51 CONTINUED -

FADE OUT.

THE END

(But one last title: "If you'd like to be a contestant on The Game, send a self-addressed envelope to Damon Killian, c/o ICS Broadcasting...")